THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MYSTICISM

CHARLES MORRIS ADDISON

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THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MYSTICISM

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BY

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TO

JOHN WALLACE SUTER

WITH WHOM I HAVE SOUGHT FOR GOD

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PREFACE

THE lectures which form the substance of this volume were written at the request of the Faculty of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge and were delivered there in May, 1915. They were given also, in November of the same year, at the Theological Department of the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee. They were not written for publication but for intimate conferences with younger ministers and young men studying for the ministry. This will explain their familiar character.

I was speaking to friends whom I wished to interest in Mysticism, to get them to study it and to practise it, because of its growing importance in and for the life of to-day. They did not think Mysticism had any message for them or for their people. They thought it was a curious abnormality in the religious life of the past. So had I once thought. But I have been led by so many unlooked-for

and gracious openings to feel differently and to gain so much, that I felt drawn to get others to start on the same path and to outgo me. For if the Way was open to me, surely any other man, minister or layman can walk in it.

So I wrote out of my own heart and the lectures came out more like sermons than essays, because I was a missionary and not a professor.

In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to Messrs. Burns and Oates for permission to quote from their edition of Francis Thompson's poems; to the Macmillan Company for their permission to give extracts from their editions of Tennyson and Matthew Arnold, and also to the Houghton Mifflin Company for similar privileges in connection with the works of Lowell.

C. M. A.

CONTENTS

I. The Longing for God and Its Implications 3

II. The Way Toward God 39

III. The Meeting Point 74

IV. St. Francis of Assisi, Heinrich Suso and Mother Julian of Norwich . . . 106

V. Modern Mysticism 149

VI. Practical Mysticism 183

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MYSTICISM

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MYSTICISM

I

THE LONGING FOR GOD AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

THESE lectures are concerned with the theory of Mysticism only as that may be of use in learning how to practise it. What we are, I hope, to be interested in, is Mysticism as an Art. There has of late been much careful study of Mysticism as a Science, to understand its philosophical and theological assumptions and its psychological methods. Du Prel and Récéjac and James and others have made much clearer "the bases of the mystic knowledge," but their discussions are mainly academic. They are tremendously interesting, but they tend rather to make more intelligent the criticism of Mysticism than to make more Mystics. On the other hand, there are many little hand-

books, whose authors and titles I need not mention, which offer you short and easy paths to the practice of Mysticism, which are founded (some of them) upon very distorted views of psychology, upon very weak philosophical presuppositions, and with theological ideas widely at variance with the truths of Christianity, most of them having more interest in the body than in the soul.

I should like to mediate between these two extremes. I should like to make use of the studies of others, and try to show how the theories they have set forth may be applied to the actual practice of Mysticism, and by making my practical suggestions depend upon scientific foundations, give the art of being a Mystic a firmer basis than is afforded by the little tract, "How to Wake the Solar Plexus."

Too long has Mysticism been regarded as a peculiar thing, attributed to a few peculiar people:—a mental aberration, a theological heresy, an ascetic life. All these, and more, have been at times attached to it; but the thing itself persists. And my aim is to get at the thing itself, to seek its foundation in our common human nature, to show the implications contained in it, and having discovered its essence, to explain

its method, show how the art is to be practised and so make it useful in our lives and in the lives of those to whom we are called to minister.

Mysticism is founded on man's conscious need of communion with God, as painting and sculpture are founded on man's craving for beauty. Everything else in Mysticism grows out of this. It is the art which some men have developed to satisfy this need. In this lecture I purpose to speak of this longing, and of certain implications contained in it, not to prove any of them, but assuming them exactly as Mysticism does, to proceed to build our study on them. Only so shall we be kept from drifting into side issues and non-essentials, and be guided by this golden thread through the psychological intricacies, the individual idiosyncrasies and the theological vagaries which lie in wait for the student of Mysticism. Such a course will also help us to understand the common feeling which binds us to the Mystics, and will show us how practical and modern a thing is Mysticism.

I say that the cause of Mysticism is man's conscious need of God. This makes a very broad foundation, as broad as religion itself,

for Mysticism is only one form of religion. There is a longing in the human heart for God, universal and inextinguishable, a longing so deep and so intense that it was well called by one who knew the dryness of the Syrian desert the "thirst" of the soul for the living God. It may not always be acknowledged, it may not even be clearly known, but it is there in every heart. The savage with his crude rites and cruel sacrifices, his fetishes and medicine men, may not clearly formulate his want, but we know that all he does comes from the outreach of his soul towards something not himself, which his felt want leads him to believe is obtainable. Just what the want is, or whence the satisfaction is to come, he does not know.

The Old Testament is called the Book of Promise. If there were no unsatisfied desires in the religious life there would be nothing to promise; but the Jews looked forward, yearned and strained their eyes. They are the people of a still unfulfilled prophecy. Their book is an unfinished torso,—it breaks off in the middle of a sentence. All the way through, the thirst for a Saviour is the most prominent characteristic of their Book. All the way from Adam and Eve, with the promise of a Seed

which should deliver their posterity from the curse of their sin, down to that last Old Testament character, John the Baptist, with his anxious question: "Art thou he that should come or look we for another?" always there is the constant onlooking expectation and desire.

The whole drama of the life of Job is the delineation of his struggle to find and reach God, and so learn why all his troubles had come upon him: "Even to-day is my complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." [1]

The Psalms, deepest expressions of the religious life, are full of these longings: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" [2]

"O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and weary land where no water is." [3]

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." [4]

[1] Job 23:2, 3.
[2] Psalm 42:1, 2.
[3] Psalm 63:1.
[4] Isaiah 55:6.

And remember Philip's question: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"; and the altar to the Unknown God, which was but the visible expression of a desire to reach the ultimate Zeus, whoever he might be.

The same longing persists. It is about us to-day. It is felt by many men of science, by physicians and philosophers and poets. The cases are almost as well known as the texts I have quoted.

There is Darwin, who lost not only God but the very enjoyment of poetry and music out of his life, and who knew his loss and deplored it. There are few things more pathetic than the awful void made, in the lives of such men as he and Kingdon Clifford and George Romanes, by a wrong idea of the nature of the proof required before a man could find God. The latter said, before he found the way (and his words remind us of Job's, with all their sublime trust left out): "When at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which was once mine and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it;—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid

the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible." [5]

For such men a glory has departed, and they know it is gone, and they miss it and seek to regain it. It is a common condition in these days among many men. They may not repeat the world-old cry of Job: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him"; they may veil it in the garb of scientific research or in the imagery of the poet. But the question is there. Few have voiced it better than Matthew Arnold, the poet of aloofness, of a longing which just missed connection with its object:

"Yes, in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless, watery wild,
We mortal millions live alone."

Again:

"We but dream we have our wish'd for powers,
Ends we seek, we never shall attain.
Ah! some power exists there which is ours?
Some end is there we indeed may gain?"

But the proof of the longing of the human heart for God does not depend only upon the

[5] Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 29.

testimony of others. Our own hearts tell the same story. We have felt the longing. Sometimes it is weak and does not trouble us, and sometimes it breaks out fiercely and will not let us alone. Most of the time our spiritual life is very lonesome. It is because there is one heart in all of us and God made it for himself, and that heart in each of us is restless until it find rest in God.

Now, as I have said, this unsatisfied yearning is the cause, the reason, the fundamental postulate of Mysticism. Man is incomplete, and knows it, and will be satisfied with nothing less than God. The Mystics are the people who have felt this want most keenly and been most desperately in earnest to satisfy it. I have said that all men feel it; that the want is universal; but there are degrees of desire. I think that the only reason you and I are not Mystics is that we do not want God enough. This means that while all men may be religious, they are only potentially Mystics. We may learn a lesson from the young man in Vivekananda's story who thought he wanted God more than anything, and went to an Indian Sage to learn how to find him. He received no answer to his eager questions until

he had gone many times. Then the Sage rose from his meditation and took the young man down to the river to bathe with him, and while they were in the water the Sage suddenly grasped the young man and held him down under the water till he was almost drowned. Then he released him. And when the young man had recovered the Sage said to him: "What did you want most when you were under the water?" The young man answered, "A breath of air." And the Sage said: "When you want God as you wanted that breath of air you will find him."

As Emile Boutroux says: "The starting point, the first moment, is a state of the soul which it is difficult to define, but which is characterized well enough by the German word *Sehnsucht*. It is a state of desire, vague and disturbed, very real and liable to be very intense, as a passion of the soul; very indeterminate, or rather very inexplicable, as regards both its object and its cause. It is an aspiration towards an unknown object, towards a good which the heart imperatively demands and which the mind cannot conceive. Such a state may indeed be found in men of very different

characters, and may have very different degrees of signification. In the Mystic it is profound and lasting; it works in the soul, which gradually forms for itself an idea of the object of its aspiration." [6]

Any one who will spend one hour with the Mystics will need no proof of this statement. The longing breathes through their every utterance. Let me only quote these passages, first from the "Theologia Germanica," and then from Ruysbroek, and lastly from the old English mystic writing called "The Cloud of Unknowing":

"Now mark how the Father draweth men unto Christ. When somewhat of this Perfect Good is discovered and revealed within the soul of man, as it were in a glance or flash, the soul conceiveth a longing to approach unto the Perfect Goodness, and unite herself with the Father. And the stronger this yearning groweth, the more is revealed unto her; and the more is revealed unto her, the more is she drawn toward the Father, and her desire quickened. Thus is the soul drawn and quickened into a union with the Eternal Goodness. And this is the drawing of the Father, and thus the soul is taught of Him who draweth her unto Himself, that she cannot enter into a union with Him except she come unto Him by the

[6] *International Journal of Ethics,* January, 1908, p. 183.

life of Christ. Behold! now she putteth on that life of which I have spoken afore." [7]

"Here there begins an eternal hunger, which shall nevermore be satisfied. It is the yearning and the inward aspiration of our faculty of love, and of our created spirit towards an uncreated good. And as the spirit desires joy, and is invited and constrained by God to partake of it, it is always longing to realize joy. Behold then the beginning of an eternal aspiration and of eternal efforts, while our impotence is likewise eternal. These are the poorest of all men, for they are eager and greedy, and they can never be satisfied." [8]

"And if any thought rise and will press continually above thee betwixt thee and that darkness, and ask thee saying, 'What seekest thou, and what wouldest thou have?' say thou that it is God that thou wouldest have. 'Him I covet, Him I seek, and naught but Him.'" [9]

Now in this sense of need there are contained certain implications. Man is incomplete and knows it, but he has also a sense of completeness. If he did not he could not know his incompleteness. The want postulates its satisfaction and also its own capacity to receive it. It implies, you see, God and our capacity for

[7] *Theologia Germanica,* Trans. by Winkworth: pp. 201-202.

[8] Maeterlinck: *Ruysbroek and the Mystics,* pp. 147-148.

[9] *The Cloud of Unknowing,* p. 90.

God, and the ultimate possibility of our being able to get at him in complete and satisfying communion. As in geometry, given a certain axiom, certain deductions flow naturally from it, so here, in our study of Mysticism, if this longing, universal and in some men intense, be given, there follow, there are implied in it, certain apparently necessary deductions:

(a) The mere longing implies its satisfaction.

(b) The mere longing implies a prior, if incomplete, possession.

(c) There can be no satisfaction short of the Infinite God.

(d) To obtain this satisfaction there must be some essential relationship between God and Man.

(e) While the priority must be on the side of God, there must be co-operation by man, i.e. there are practical means to be used to gain the end. There is a Mystic Way.

It is only fair to say at once that I make my own these presuppositions of Mysticism. We cannot understand it together unless we can meet it on its own ground, and as no Mystic has ever cared to prove the existence of God, or man's spiritual relationship to him, or

the possibility of intercommunion with him, so I feel no need to do more than base this study on these as facts. I should never get to my subject if I were obliged to prove every step leading to it. And it is only fair to add that our subject is not Mysticism in general, but Christian Mysticism. It is a large subject as it is, but the whole is enormous, for the longing is as wide as humanity and many men have tried to satisfy it in many ways. The savage dimly gropes, the Buddhist has his Nirvana, the Positivist his Humanity, the Philosopher his Absolute, even the Mystic his Abyss. But for us we must leave aside the fascinating field of Mysticism as it is found among non-Christian systems of religion and thought, and confine our study, as our practice must be confined, to Christian Mysticism, and assume at once that the longing is not for Nirvana or the Unknowable, but for the Christian God.

With sublime confidence our Mysticism takes this God for granted. Jesus Christ no more thought of proving the existence of God than you and I would think of stopping now to prove the existence of the atmosphere in and through which we are speaking and listening

to each other. Christ found God already installed in the heart of man, and Christ was so sure, that he could not bring himself to argue about the mere existence of the Father in whose Being and Love he perpetually rested. And more than this: he must have known, as we are slow to perceive, that God cannot be proved. All the so-called proofs are only *ex-post facto* reasonings on facts already given by God, by which the reasonableness of his existence is demonstrated after the fact is already known. The proofs, then, are merely his manifestations, multitudinous and manifold, and the arguments merely expositions of his modes of manifestation.[10]

[10] "There is no demonstration of the being of God. In every mode of demonstration whose object is to arrive at it, it is assumed. It can form no term in the formulas of logic. It is not a truth that is to be counted among the achievements of human thought. There can be no demonstration of the being of God by man: there may be the manifestation of God to man." [Mulford: *The Republic of God,* p. 5.]

"Surely, the existence of God cannot be demonstrated if He is the Whole, the ground and content of all demonstration, of all thought, even when we try to put Him far from us as the Unknowable. The attempt to prove the existence of God would be like endeavoring to prove that number exists by the use of certain numerals, whereas number is used in every possible demonstration: we show its existence by using it. 'You cannot prove the existence of a Deity by any reasoning process, for there may be nothing in a logical conclusion

The best proof you can have that God is, is to experience him, to feel him touch you, and this is what the Mystic has actually done. The Mystic does not care to know anything about God; he wants to know God, and as far as he can, to be "one'd" in his deepest nature with God.

(A.) The first inference we draw from this longing of man for God is that such longing implies that there is a satisfaction prepared for it.

If, as John Fiske says, this relation of longing between man and the invisible world, which is God, is a relation of which only the subjec-

which was not in the premises; and if God be in your premises, you have begged the question. If He be not in your premises, He will not be logically found in your conclusion.'" [Dresser: *The Perfect Whole,* pp. 81-82 (quoting Van Norden, *The Psychic Factor,* p. 204).]

"It is with purpose that I use the word *assumption.* As a matter of history, the existence of a quasi-human God has always been an assumption or postulate. It is something which men have all along taken for granted. It probably never occurred to any one to try to prove the existence of such a God until it was doubted, and doubts on that subject are very modern. Omitting from the account a few score of ingenious philosophers, it may be said that all mankind, the wisest and the simplest, have taken for granted the existence of a Deity, or deities of a psychical nature more or less similar to that of humanity. Such a postulate has formed a part of all human thinking from primitive ages down to the present time." [Fiske: *Through Nature to God,* p. 164.]

tive term, Man, is real, and the objective term, God, is non-existent, then it is something utterly without precedent in the whole history of creation. Nowhere in Nature do we find such maladjustment to environment. Nowhere do we find the implantation of a desire which has not somewhere provided for it its complete satisfaction. The longing of the duck for the water, of the eagle for his mountain, of the moose for his mate,—nay, even so low as that of the ass for his master's crib,—all are proofs that somewhere is water, and crag, and mate, and food, for every thirst has its drink, and to thirst is to postulate the drink. Therefore every longing is a prophecy and a proof of satisfaction provided somewhere, somehow, some time. The universal healthy longing for God is a proof that there is a God, and a prophecy that he shall be found. I say this with all positiveness; nay, more:

> "The thing we long for, that we are
> For one transcendant moment." [11]

[11] "Wants are the bands and cements between God and us. Had we not wanted, we never could have been obliged. Whereas now we are infinitely obliged, because we want infinitely. From Eternity it was requisite that we should want. We could never else have enjoyed anything: Our own wants are treasures. And if want be a treasure, sure everything is

Everywhere in this life satisfaction means stagnation, and stagnation means death. "In the physical world hunger is a mark of health and the want of appetite proclaims disease. So the mind grows through the longing to know." And so the spirit is dead if it has no longing.

so. Wants are the ligatures between God and us, the sinews that convey Senses from Him into us, whereby we live in Him, and feel His enjoyments. For had we not been obliged by having our wants satisfied, we should not have been created to love Him. And had we not been created to love Him, we could never have enjoyed His eternal Blessedness." [Traherne: *Centuries of Meditations,* pp. 34-35.]

"In accord with this conjecture as to the position of religious truth, namely, that it is determined by the movement of will-to-believe, is an old observation of religious experience. It is written that he who seeks finds: the connection between seeking and finding is infallible. Such infallible connection may be many-wise understood, but it may be thus understood, that the *seeking brings the finding with it.* 'Thou wouldst not seek me hadst thou not already found me,' said Pascal, and to Sabatier this thought came 'like a flash of light . . . the solution of a problem that had long appeared insoluble.' The religiousness of man's nature is the whole substance of his revelation. Whatever we *impute* to the world comes back to us as a quality pre-resident there—is this not the whole illusion of reality? Impute then to the world a living beneficence: the world will not reject this imputation, will *be* even as you have willed it. Your belief becomes (as Fichte held) an evidence of your character—not of your learning. He who waits his assent till God is proved to him, will never find Him. But he who seeks finds—has already found." [Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* p. 147.]

It is the mood of hope, the only hopeful sign, this intense desire to know more of God, more of his life, of his holiness, of his power, for ever closer communion with him, for more of the divine likeness in the soul. "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." And St. Paul said: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but I press on," and wherever we see him after that, on whatever radiant height he may be, he is still pressing on with unsatisfied longings and quenchless ardor towards loftier summits, crying ever for more intimate knowledge of Christ and more and more of the fulness of God.

(B.) Next, this longing not only implies a satisfaction to be provided in the future, but also a present, though not yet understood, partial possession.

There must be something of the Infinite in us or we could not know enough about it to long for it. "He hath set Eternity in their heart." [12] As Augustine says, speaking from God's side, "In that thou hast sought me, thou hast already found me." The Mystics themselves realize this. They are seeking a Pres-

[12] Eccles. 3:11.

ence which is already within them. Hear St. Bernard in his Homilies on the "Song of Songs":

"I sought after Him whom my soul was desirous to love; for it was not then able to love One whom it had not yet found, or, at least it loved Him less than it wished to do, and on that account was seeking Him that it might love Him with an increased affection, though assuredly it would not have sought Him without having some degree of love for Him previously." [13]

And in the most beautiful language Mother Juliana of Norwich expresses the same idea:

"For I saw him and sought him: for we be now so blind and so unwise, that we can never seek God until what time that he of his goodness sheweth him to us. And when we see ought of him graciously, then are we stirred by the same grace, to seek with great desire to see him more blessedfully. And thus I saw him and sought him, and I had him and wanted him: and this is and should be our common working in this life, as to my sight." [14]

And it is not so far a cry as it seems to

[13] St. Bernard: *Song of Songs*, p. 35.
[14] Mother Juliana: *Revelations of Divine Love*, p. 28.

our own day and our own Royce, who says:

"It is this homing instinct that we for the first merely articulate when we talk of true Being. Being means something for us, however, because of the positive presence and finite consciousness of this inner meaning of even our poorest ideas. We seek. That is a fact. We seek a city still out of sight. In the contrast with this goal we live. But if this be so, then already we actually possess something of Being even in our finite seeking; for the readiness to seek is already something of an attainment, even if a poor one." [15]

The atmosphere is before the lungs, the mother's love before the child's. And so when you and I stretch out our hands for holiness we are seeking something which, in a very small measure, we have already, or we could not know how to long for it. When we cry out for the living God, we are crying for something of which we have just caught a glimpse. The search for God really follows the finding of us by God. It is the result of his prior, seeking love. It is because he has suggested himself to us that we immediately realize our need and crave its satisfaction.

[15] Royce: *The World and the Individual,* Vol. I, p. 181.

(C.) Having this glimpse of the Infinite God, the longing for him cannot be satisfied with anything less than the Infinite. No demi-gods will do. "I desire not that which comes forth from thee, but only I desire Thee, O sweetest love." [16]

"Alas, my Lord God, what is al Thou canst give to a loving soul which sigheth and panteth for Thee alone, and esteemeth al things as dung that she may gain Thee? What is al, I say, whilst Thou givest not Thyself, but art that one thing which is only necessary and which alone can satisfy our souls? Was it any comfort to Mary Magdalene, when she sought Thee, to find two angels which presented themselves instead of Thee? Verily, I cannot think it was any joy unto her. For that soul that hath set her whole love and desire on Thee can never find any true satisfaction but only in Thee." [17]

As the poet Faber says:

"O majesty unspeakable and dread!
Wert thou less mighty than thou art,
Thou wast, O Lord, too great for our belief,
Too little for our heart.

[16] Catherine of Genoa. *Vita e Dottrina,* cap. VI.
[17] Gertrude More: *Spiritual Exercises,* p. 26.

"But greatness which is infinite makes room
For all things in its lap to lie;
We should be crushed by a magnificence
Short of infinity." [18]

"Surely he that seeketh God perfectly he will not rest him finally in the remembrance of any angel or saint that is in Heaven." [19]

(D.) And then again this longing is the proof of *our* divinity and capacity. We could not long for anything if we ourselves had reached finality. Why do we seek things that are not here? Why do we not sing through the world as the bluebird sings through the spring days? It is because these days are the bird's all, and they are not our all. This world is not our whole environment, and so our eyes are not satisfied with their seeing, nor our ears with their hearing. Our intellects are not filled with their knowledge nor our hearts with their love,—great, beautiful as these satisfactions are they are not enough for us. They do not satisfy. We are greater than we know, and our qualification for being made divine and perfect lies just in this sense of want. That which makes us superior to the beasts of the

[18] *Poems*, p. 20.
[19] *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 106.

field is just this superior and superb insight into our own weakness and insufficiency. Some day we shall be satisfied. And satisfied not only because satisfaction is attached to longing, not only because we have a glimpse and a little possession already, not only because we demand the Infinite, but because the Infinite and the finite belong together. There is a real relationship which is the cause of all the yearning and which makes the yearning mutual. This the Mystic takes for granted also; and so we do. God and Man belong together. There is a Sonship in Humanity because there is a Fatherhood in God. This makes every good thing possible. I am not arguing but only illustrating when I quote: [20]

Martensen says, in his Ethics: "Every man is infinitely richer in his being than in his performance, is infinitely more than he shows himself or can show himself to be." [21]

Wendt, in "The Teachings of Jesus," declares that: "God does not become the Father, but is the Heavenly Father even of those who become His sons." [22]

[20] Romans 8:10; II Cor. 13:5; Eph. 3:17; I John 3:1.
[21] *Christian Ethics,* Vol. I, p. 82.
[22] *The Teachings of Jesus,* Vol. I, p. 193.

"What such experiences imply and illustrate may be more compactly stated in terms of the logic of communication as follows: In order that any two beings should establish communication they must already have something in common." [23]

"As every being is capable of attracting its like, and humanity is, in a way, like God, as bearing within itself some resemblance to its Prototype, the soul is by a strict necessity attracted to the kindred Deity. In fact, what belongs to God must, by all means and at any cost, be preserved for Him." [24]

"For nothing can have any longing desire but after its own likeness, nor could anything be made to desire God, but that which came from Him and had the nature of Him." [25]

"The Word became flesh that He might make man capable of receiving Divinity." [26]

(E.) And lastly: Men have not lost God. They have only lost the way to God. God needs to be made real and present before men can be

[23] Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience,* p. 272.

[24] Gregory of Nyssa: *The Soul and the Resurrection,* quoted in Jones' *Studies in Mystical Religion,* p. 85.

[25] William Law, *The Spirit of Love.*

[26] Athanasius: Contra Ar. II, p. 59.

satisfied. They must exchange their ideas about God for a constant feeling of his presence. In some way they must be made aware of him. This is what Mysticism undertakes to do. It is not vague, but immediately and intensely practical. The need is real and nothing but reality will satisfy it. It is an Art to be practised rather than a Science to be reasoned out. It considers that the academic question, "Is there a God?" is best answered by showing the way to him, by obtaining a personal conviction of his presence. And so the Mystic's question is a personal one: "Where is God and how may I find him?" Therefore there is a Mystic way. Men must understand the path or the process or the rules—call it what you will—which will help them to get into communion with God. The trouble with most of us is that we have not yet made this connection, either from lack of desire or from lack of knowledge of the way. Our souls have not yet thrilled at the touch of God. Such a touch is not a casual happening, a matter of luck, or even of temperament. It is real, and the real in us must be developed until like meets like, *Cor ad cor loquitur,* and we know even as we are known. The process is called the Mystic

Way, and before treating of it in the next lecture I will gather up something of what we have been thinking and anticipate something of what we are going to think and try to make it into a definition of Mysticism.

While I have said that Mysticism was most practical, it is true also, and must be said, that like all the deepest things in life, it is hard to define. Definition always tends to clearness, but sometimes we have a knowledge which it is not easy to put into words. So Mysticism almost defies definition. It is as undefinable and yet as recognizable as Beauty, or Love—or God, yet still it is possible to get a better understanding of it and to approach some sort of definition which will be true as far as it goes.

The word Mysticism is commonly used in many connections, and very loosely. Sometimes it is used to denote Symbolism or Allegorism, an undue stress upon poetic form. Sometimes it means the wildest vagaries of Oriental occultism and magic, and sometimes merely the harmless idiosyncrasies of the poor parson who is only unpractical and cannot balance his accounts. If we do not understand a

man's theology we think we have condemned it when we have called it mystical.

But if we press further for a proper understanding of the thing we are met by just as much divergence among those scholars who attempt a definition as among the unthinking crowd which does not care for one. Inge, in his Bampton Lectures on "Christian Mysticism," gives a selected list of twenty-six, and I think I am safe in saying that not more than two of them agree. Perhaps we can best guide ourselves through their confusion by dividing them into four classes:

1st: Those which mistake disparagement and abuse for definition, as Noack: "Mysticism is formless speculation"; and Vaughan, who, after spending many "Hours with the Mystics" can only say of them that their principle is "That form of error which mistakes for a divine manifestation the operations of a merely human faculty." And then you know Harnack, who, with Hermann and the whole Ritschlian school, bitterly opposes a Mysticism they misunderstand, defines it as "Rationalism applied to a sphere above reason"; while Hermann says bluntly that "the Mystic's experience of God is a delusion."

It is certain that these statements do not help us. We must at least believe that not all Mystics are fools if we would come into any sympathetic apprehension of their teaching.

2nd: Those who would describe Mysticism by its aberrations and excesses, as with Victor Cousin, who defines it as consisting "in substituting ecstasy for reason, rapture for philosophy"; and Max Nordau says of it: "Mysticism blurs outlines and makes the transparent opaque." But it is wrong always to define anything by its abnormalities or even by its exaggerations. Homo-sexuality is not love. There is a normal and an abnormal love, and so there is a normal and an abnormal Mysticism, and while we may learn much from the diversions from the norm, we must not confound the two nor make the exception the rule.

3rd: Those who run to the other extreme and would define Mysticism in such broad and general terms as to merge it into ordinary Christian living and thought, as when Ewald defines it by saying: "Mystical theology begins by maintaining that man has fallen away from God and craves to be again united with him." This is perfectly true, but Mysticism is more than, or is at least not exactly like, Cal-

vinism or evangelicalism. And Moberly, in his great book, "Atonement and Personality," says: "In proportion as Mysticism either claims to be or is regarded by ordinary Christians as being, an abnormal by-way or by-region of special experiences rather than as the realization in special fulness of that which is the central inspiration and meaning of all Christian life as well practical as contemplative, in that proportion does the Mysticism itself become directly liable to various forms of exaggeration and unhealthiness, while the Christianity which is content to remain 'non-mystical' is impoverished at the very center of its being. All Christians profess to believe in the Holy Ghost. Had only all Christians understood and lived up to their belief they would all have been Mystics; or, in other words, there would have been no Mysticism." [27]

Such definitions evaporate all that is definite in Mysticism. We may all hope, and perhaps some us expect, that the trend of our Christian living is to be more and more towards Mysticism as its most perfect expression when properly understood and used. But just now we are seeking a definition that will really de-

[27] *Atonement and Personality*, p. 315.

fine our subject. I hope to show, as Prof. Rufus M. Jones says, that "Mysticism is simply Religion in its most acute, intense and living stage," [28] but we must first distinguish clearly its principles and methods from those which are non-mystical, before we can intelligently bring them close together again. So we may hope more, I think, from the last group of definitions, which try to tell us something of Mysticism where it is differentiated from ordinary forms of Christianity, both in its philosophy and its practice, omitting all that it has in common.

4th: Récéjac says: "Mysticism claims to be able to know the Unknowable without help from dialectics, and is persuaded that by means of love and will it reaches a point to which thought, unaided, cannot attain." [29]

And Rufus M. Jones says, most truly, that Mysticism is "that type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the divine Presence." [30]

And Miss Underhill says: "The Mystics

[28] *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. xv.
[29] *The Bases of the Mystic Knowledge*, p. 7.
[30] *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. xv.

find the basis of their method not in logic but in life, in the existence of a discoverable real, a spark of true being within the seeking subject, which can, in that ineffable experience which they call the act of union, fuse itself with and thus apprehend the reality of the sought object. In theological language their theory of knowledge is that the spirit of man, itself essentially divine, is capable of immediate communion with God, the only reality." [31]

Schuré defines Mysticism as "The art of finding God in one's self."

"Mysticism is that form of religious experience in which man is so directly and intuitively conscious of God's presence within him, that, with the aid of symbols, he can express this experience least inadequately as a union with the Divine." [32]

I hardly dare to add another to the many definitions of Mysticism, especially after calling it undefinable; and yet I am impelled to do so in the hope that it may clear the way for a better understanding of what is to follow,

[31] Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 28.

[32] James Thayer Addison: *Mysticism in the Fourth Gospel*, p. 26.

even if I have to anticipate some of my statements.

It is such a personal thing that I prefer to describe it not as a system called Mysticism, but in terms of a man, as the Creed of a Mystic, and I say that a Christian Mystic is that kind of a Christian who longs for, and who believes he can have, an experience of intimate communion with God, through Christ, in this life. This is his supreme purpose. To carry this out he believes that by a course of training he may so develop his inmost self—call it what you will—that his whole nature becomes open and susceptible to God to such a degree that the fact of God's presence within him becomes, for him, the supreme reality of his life. And lastly, the true Mystic not only has this longing for God and this determination to fit himself for God, but he perseveres until he accomplishes his purpose and attains real union with God.

I call your attention to what is in my definition and not in the others, viz.: the method. It connects the Longing with the Fruition by a Way. I think this is important.

But we must remember that definitions, while necessary for a science, are only helpful

for an art. We can never understand Mysticism by defining it. It is a life which must make its appeal to our lives, and is best studied in the lives of the Mystics themselves. They have been to the country we only read about. They have succeeded, where so many of us have so far failed, in establishing direct communion with God, and the atmosphere of their country is so rare that we cannot breathe it suddenly; their lives are lived on a plane to which we have not yet reached. If the pure in heart are the ones who see God, then there must be some purity in our hearts before we can even see those who have seen him. Fortunately we do not have to depend upon definitions, nor is it a matter of logical demonstration. There is a Mystic Way, and if we choose we can follow it, and if we follow it it brings its own reward. It is open to all who want God enough to put themselves in it, and it ends at the last by their finding themselves in him.

As Coventry Patmore makes them say:

"'Oh, taste and see!' they cry in accents of astounding certainty and joy. 'Ours is an experimental science. We can but communicate our system, never its result. We come to you not as thinkers, but as doers. Leave your deep and absurd trust in the senses, with

their language of dot and dash, which may possibly report fact but can never communicate personality. If philosophy has taught you anything, she has surely taught you the length of her tether, and the impossibility of attaining to the doubtless admirable grazing land which lies beyond it. One after another, idealists have arisen who, straining frantically at the rope, have announced to the world their approaching liberty; only to be flung back at last into the little circle of sensation. But here we are, a small family, it is true, yet one that refuses to die out, assuring you that we have slipped the knot and are free of those grazing-grounds. This is evidence which you are bound to bring into account before you can add up the sum total of possible knowledge; for you will find it impossible to prove that the world, as seen by the mystics, "unimaginable, formless, dark, with excess of bright," is less real than that which is expounded by the youngest and most promising demonstrator of the psycho-chemical universe. We will be quite candid with you. Examine us as much as you like: our machinery, our veracity, our results. We cannot promise that you shall see what we have seen, for here each man must adventure for himself; but we defy you to stigmatize our experiences as impossible or invalid. Is your world of experience so well and logically founded that you dare make of it a standard? Philosophy tells you that it is founded on nothing better than the reports of your sensory apparatus and the traditional concepts of the race. Certainly it is imperfect, probably it is illusion; in any event, it never

touches the foundation of things. Whereas what the world, which truly knows *nothing,* calls "mysticism" is the science of *ultimates* . . . the science of self-evident Reality, which cannot be "reasoned about," because it is the object of pure reason or perception.'" ["The Rod, the Root and the Flower," Aurea Dicta CXXVIII.]

Let us accept their invitation to taste and see. Experiment in all honesty. Adventure for God. Start on the Mystic Way.

So I propose in the next lecture to take them at their word, and to let them tell us what they have done and felt, and make up from their testimony a directory of the Way and see if the path is not inviting. I think you will find it less unfamiliar than you think. I beg you to carry over to it the few thoughts I have given you to-day. Like Bergson's *Memory,* our study is to be cumulative, and we cannot leave anything behind except, I trust, our prejudices, which you know are only unfavorable opinions founded upon ignorance.

SUGGESTED READING

FISKE: *Through Nature to God.* Houghton, Mifflin Co. 1899.

JONES: *Social Law in the Spiritual World.* John C. Winston Co. 1904.

INGE: *Christian Mysticism.* Charles Scribner's Sons. 1899.

INGE: *Light, Life, and Love.* Methuen & Co. 1904.

FLEMING: *Mysticism in Christianity.* Fleming H. Revell Co. 1913.

Theologia Germanica, translated by Miss Winkworth. Macmillan & Co. 1874.

ST. AUGUSTINE: *Confessions.*

ROYCE: *Sources of Religious Insight.* Charles Scribner's Sons. 1912.

II

THE WAY TOWARD GOD

THE Mystic aims to find God and to complete himself in him.

We saw in the last lecture that he begins with a sense of need, a need not peculiar to himself, but universal, and felt by all men, although in varying degree. And we saw that from this longing grew a number of postulates, truths which could reasonably be assumed, granting that this longing is a genuinely human thing. The Mystic believes that this want is not purely subjective, but is part of his divine endowment, a taste of divinity given him to whet his appetite for more; that to desire is to have, to seek is to find. And because his desire is so intense, because he knows that nothing less than God will satisfy it, he sets out to find God by experience, and is sure in his heart that he will arrive.

So to-day it is our purpose to study how the

Mystic proceeds to attain his aim. There are certain means to be used by which man can reach God, or perhaps we had better say, certain means by which man may hold himself open for God to come to him; or better still, call it the secret of that descent into the center of his being that God may be found already there.

Whatever we call it, it is a process. It is the Mystic Way.

Unless man is like God, bears his nature, he cannot find God nor hope to know him. The hope of success lies in this relationship which we have assumed exists. But the Mystic knows that the mere fact of relationship is not enough. To know that at once reveals the humiliating difference. He cannot know God until he becomes more like God. It is a circle, but a virtuous one. To know more makes like, and as each touch of likeness is added comes a truer knowledge.

Therefore I keep repeating that Mysticism is not a mere opinion, not a philosophy, not even a hunger, however great. It is a practical way of life, a development of the self in the attempt to satisfy that hunger. It is a striving to remake the character, to fit it that

it may become worthy to receive the satisfaction it craves. As Récéjac says: "There is no other means of getting possession of the Absolute than by adapting ourselves to it, and when once it has first taken possession of us we acquire experience of it in ourselves.[1]

This at once differentiates Mysticism from all the vagueness and visionariness which have been ascribed to it, and rules out many of the definitions we have studied. It may dream and poetize and philosophize, but in the true Mystic these are all subordinate to the practical aim, which is Sanctity, the fitting of one's self to receive God. Leuba says: "One of the marks of the true Mystic is the tenacious and heroic energy with which he pursues a definite moral ideal." [2]

Even Sanctity, the perfecting of individual character, is only a means to an end, the attainment of the supreme end, living union with God. In other words, the Mystic cares for purity of heart only that by it he may see God.

If we read the works of the Mystics themselves we discover a certain order in their discipline, sometimes set down clearly as a road

[1] *The Bases of the Mystic Knowledge*, p. 35.
[2] Quoted in Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 109.

for others to follow, sometimes appearing only in the course of a life of devotion. These steps in the Mystic Way vary somewhat in number, but in character they are so much alike that we can make a composite diagram of them which will do for our purpose in understanding the principle, even if it do not fit any one Mystic exactly. Some of them have insisted on three, as in the "Theologia Germanica," [3] Ruysbroek calls his three steps the Active Life, the Inward Life, and the Contemplative Life, although he proceeds to subdivide each of these. Others set forth seven. Miss Underhill compromises on five. I think we shall gain in clearness if we adhere to the larger number,

[3] "Now be assured that no one can be enlightened unless he be first cleansed or purified and stripped. So also no one can be united with God unless he be first enlightened. Thus there are three stages: first, the purification; secondly, the enlightenment; thirdly, the union. The purification concerneth those who are beginning or repenting, and is brought to pass in a threefold wise: by contrition and sorrow for sin, by full confession, by hearty amendment. The enlightening belongeth to such as are growing, and also taketh place in three ways: to wit, by the eschewal of sin, by the practice of virtue and good works, and by the willing endurance of all manner of temptation and trials. The union belongeth to such as are perfect, and also is brought to pass in three ways: to wit, by pureness and singleness of heart, by love, and by the contemplation of God, the Creator of all things." [*Theologia Germanica,* Trans. by Winkworth: pp. 44-45.]

and by thus subdividing make our steps shorter. I would say, then, that the processes through which the Mystics in general pass from longing to fruition are these seven:—

1st. The Longing, of which we have already treated. That surely must come first and be real and intense. It need not imply a definite consciousness of its Object, but it need be none the less urgent because vague and diffused.

2nd. The awakening of the soul when, more or less suddenly, it catches a glimpse of its goal and undergoes a change in the level of its living. It is the result of what is called in religious phrase, Conversion.

3rd. The sight of God and Self thus brought together even with the slightest understanding of the former, gives to the Self that sense of shame we call Repentance, that desire for change we call Metanoia, the result of which is often the crudest asceticism. It is the attempt of the finite and sinful to eliminate, not only by repudiation but by discipline, the imperfections and sins which keep the soul away from God. The Mystical word for this is Purgation.

4th. Not following but running parallel

with this is the next step, called Contemplation. In this are the Silence, Meditation, Prayer, Concentration, visions and adventures of the soul, processes all by which the soul, gradually becoming more pure in heart, attunes itself, putting itself *en rapport* with God.

5th. Then these glimpses result some day in a vision which is clear enough to rejoice the soul, in a sense of the Divine Presence, which satisfies, even if not completely. It is called Illumination. The search is rewarded, the mountain top is seen, if not yet reached. Joy enters the soul.

6th. But so near are joy and sorrow in life that along with the vision come alternations of darkness; along with the satisfaction come moments of black despair; along with the sense of growing union come awful moments when the sense of the Divine Presence is lost. Sometimes this state will alternate, and sometimes, and for long at a time, it will occupy the whole field. It is called the Dark Night of the Soul, or the Mystic Death. It is mysteriously connected with the death of the Self. It is the last step in Purgation. In utter submission the soul gives up and, asking nothing, is then prepared for the final step, the

7th, which culminates in perfect union, God waiting only for the complete preparation of man's soul to reward it by inward joys which only those who have endured to the end can understand. It is called the Unitive State.

I. In tracing more in detail these steps of the Mystic Way we need not retrace the first. We take the Longing for granted.

II. Sooner or later, to the earnest soul seeking satisfaction, there comes the answer back from God. The connection is shown. The soul recognizes its goal. It has nothing to do with the acceptance of theological statements. It is too real for that. It is Life, enhanced life, life on a higher plane, the setting of the character in a different environment. You may call this Conversion, if you will, but with the Mystic, while it may be the same in essence as the ordinary sort, it is much higher in degree. By so much as the initial longing was greater, the joy that now comes is more intense.

It may also be either sudden or gradual, but these are very relative terms. Like a long-dreaded and long-expected death, when it comes it is always sudden and yet there is no touch of God which comes to the soul that is

not long prepared for. Conversion is always both a process and a crisis. St. Paul's is called sudden, but there must have been many warnings that came to him in the "goads," much preparation in twinges of conscience, and uncertainties and longings and regrets. St. Augustine has told us in his "Confessions," as he looked back over the course of his life, how many leadings were given him, withholdings from sin, guidances in his life's work, influences from many sources, all unsuspected and unheeded, and yet all found afterwards to have had their convergence upon that one supreme moment when he heard the words, "Tolle, lege" and was converted. But who shall say that even that result was sudden? As well fix the moment when the rose blooms or the apple ripens.[4]

[4] "There are times in Alpine climbing when the stroke of an ice-axe or the shout of a climber will set an avalanche in motion. It was not the shout that was fit to move a thousand tons of snow. It was the weight of the snow itself in equipoise so fine that the least vibration of the air could start it. So, too, thoughts and feelings gather until a word will give them life and force to the overthrowing of spiritual dominions, principalities and powers. But the fitting word must be rightly spoken and the right word is always an appeal to something already within the soul." [Steven: *The Psychology of the Christian Soul*, p. 163.]

To almost every one who has had this experience and looks back upon it, there comes the recollection of a long, if at the time, unappreciated preparation. The flesh had been lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Doubts had been fought and longings had been stifled, modes of life were criticised and then acquiesced in. Thoughts came unbidden and were dismissed. But these all left their mark and their effect was cumulative. As the strength of them increased, the fight against them increased also; as the waters rose the dam was built higher and higher to meet and resist them. It is the everlasting conflict. And then some day the dam bursts and the water of life floods the soul, and we call that moment Conversion. It all depends upon the fight the man has made how sudden the defeat seems. But "defeat" is not the word to use. If the breaking of the dam stands for the crumbling of the old and lower self, it stands much more for the influx of the new self, the new man in Christ Jesus.[5] It is victory.

[5] "Spontaneous awakenings are the fructification of that which has been ripening within the subliminal consciousness." [Starbuck: *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 108.]

"The ideal dawns; the will is exercised in its direction;

Thus does the second stage of the Mystic Way open. It is the awakening of the soul, its new birth. The true life of the Mystic, as of every Christian, begins here, and it begins in a joy which is unutterable. All the storm and stress of the past are forgotten. In its joyous submission to God the soul, released from the bonds of self, leaps up to find "all things new." God is seen everywhere and in everything. All nature is irradiated with him. In almost all cases when the Mystic has spoken, it is, like St. Paul, of a blinding radiance.

But then these vague raptures which envelop the whole world in a new light must not dissipate the personal touch which God has laid upon the soul. His word, "My son, give me thine heart," must be heeded. And here there is an even deeper joy, the joy of self-surrender and of service. The convert hears some definite command, is given some definite task. "Rise, enter into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do," were the words to

failing, there is unrest and distress; finally the ideal is unexpectedly realized. The function of the will in Conversion then seems to be to give point and direction to the unconscious processes of growth which in turn work out and give back to clear consciousness the revelations striven after." [*Ibid.*, p. 112.]

St. Paul; and to St. Francis came the words from the Crucifix: "Go, repair my house, the which, as thou seest, is falling into decay." So Conversion, to be complete, must end in a decision of the will, crowning all that has gone before, involving often a complete change not only of the inward but of the outward life. St. Paul "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." St. Francis began immediately to repair the fabric of St. Damian.[6]

III. If Conversion is the sight of God in Christ, then surely Repentance is the sight of self in the light of God's Holiness. Then the infinite difference becomes manifest. In his light we see light. Then comes the desire for Purification, among some Mystics so deep and intense as to lead them into the extremest asceticism. All that would make life pleasant is cut off, the flesh is denied, the social instincts are crushed. This is partly as self-punishment for the past, partly an attempt to avoid the old temptations, and partly a setting free

[6] "Divine love draws those whom it seizes beyond themselves, and this so greatly that they belong no longer to themselves, but wholly to the Object loved." [Dionysius: *Divine Names*, IV, 13.]

of the soul for the highest thing, the attainment of God.[7]

All this differs from the repentance of the ordinary Christian only in degree, and even here we must be careful to remember that not all Mystics are ascetics, any more than are all ascetics Mystics. Even among the extremists their asceticism is generally temporary. They outgrow it and see its abnormal character. Suso is a fair example. After more than fifteen years of the most terrible austerities, he has told us, speaking of himself in the third person, of a vision that he had. On a certain Whitsunday a Heavenly messenger appeared to him and ordered him, in God's name, to continue them no more. He at once ceased and threw all the instruments of his sufferings into a river, and began to lead a more natural life.

[7] "Meekness in itself is nought else, but a true knowing and feeling of a man's self as he is. For surely whoso might verily see and feel himself as he is, he should verily be meek." [*The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 116.]

"And wete thou well that he that desireth for to see God, him behoveth to cleanse his soul, the which is as a mirror, in which all things are clearly seen, when it is clean; and when the mirror is foul, then mayest thou see nothing clearly within; and right so it is of thy soul, when it is foul, neither thou knowest thyself nor God." [*The Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 30.]

It is the Mystic spirit which underlies the monastic vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience. As for Poverty, Miss Underhill's quotations from Rolle and Petersen and St. John of the Cross show how high and pure is the Mystic's ideal. True poverty is only the new way of looking at Reality, of not being taken captive by the mere show of "Things." It is one's attitude towards such. "I am not speaking here of the absence of things," says St. John of the Cross, "for absence is not detachment if the desire remains—but of that detachment which consists in suppressing desire and avoiding pleasure. It is this that sets the soul free even though possession may be still retained." [8]

And Gerlac Petersen says: "Let all things be forsaken of me so that, being pure, I may be able, in great inward spaciousness and without any hurt, to suffer want of all those things which the mind of man can desire out of or except God himself." [9]

And again Richard Rolle tells us: "If thou truly all things for God forsake, see more

[8] *The Ascent of Mount Carmel,* Book I, Chap. III, 4.
[9] *Ignitum cum Deo Soliloquium,* I:1, III.

what thou despiseth than what thou forsaketh." [10]

"Fast thou never so much, wake thou never so long, rise thou never so early, lie thou never so hard, wear thou never so sharp; yea, and if it were lawful to do —as it is not—put thou out thine eyes, cut thou out thy tongue of thy mouth, stop thou thine ears and thy nose never so fast, though thou shear away thy members, and do all the pain to thy body that thou mayest or canst think: all this would help thee right nought. Yet will stirring and rising of sin be in thee." [11]

Of Chastity the Mystic has none of the monkish feeling. It is purity of heart which he seeks, and family life need not be repudiated.

And Obedience is seldom as of the monk to a human Superior. It is to God alone. But all these, and whatever else they may do or deny, are means to an end. They have no value in themselves. The Mystic is after God and so pushes from him everything that would hinder his search. It is slight wonder if in some cases he stripped himself of more than was needful.

A horrible example is given by that other-

[10] *The Mending of Life*, Ch. III.
[11] *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 113.

wise saintly Angela da Foligno, who seems to expect approval by this statement:—"In that time, and by God's will, there died my mother, who was a great hindrance unto me in following the way of God: my husband died likewise, and in a short time there also died all my children. And because I had commenced to follow the aforesaid way and had prayed God that he would rid me of them, I had great consolation of their deaths, albeit I did also feel some grief." [12]

IV. Mysticism is a life process, a method by which man attempts to put himself, by the use of means, into direct relation to reality, to turn from the "shows of things" to God himself by ever completer adjustment. So far the steps have been quite in harmony with those taken by any earnest man, be he Mystic or not. The longing, the glimpse of the goal, the striving for a better life, are parts of Mysticism only as that is human. We come now to another step where the ways part somewhat.

As we have seen, the Mystic, however the earth may become irradiated for him with the sense of God everywhere, looks for God *within himself*. He does not expect to come at God

[12] *Book of the Divine Consolation*, p. 5.

with telescope or microscope or by the logical processes of reason. To find God he must retire into his inmost self and there be quiet and look and listen. This is the step called Contemplation. It is not taken alone. It is, as I have said, parallel to that of Purgation, and even to that of Illumination. It is the common medium by which and in which the Mystic works. It is the most characteristic quality of Mysticism, and it is a large and varied one. By Contemplation I mean the Practice of the Presence of God, and it includes Quiet, Silence, Recollection, Prayer. In it are found also those peculiarly mystical tendencies to the hearing of voices and the seeing of visions, to trances and raptures and ecstasies. These will need much careful study if we would understand the theory, and much hard work if we could come to its practice. For as Miss Underhill says: "Transcendental genius, then, obeys the laws which govern all other forms of genius in being susceptible of culture, and indeed cannot develop its full powers without an educative process of some kind. This strange art of Contemplation, which the Mystic tends naturally to practise during the whole of his career—which develops step by step with his

vision and his love—demands of the self which undertakes it the same hard, dull work, the same slow training of the will which lies behind all supreme achievement, and is the price of all true liberty. It is the want of such training—such 'super-sensual drill'—which is responsible for the mass of vague, ineffectual and sometimes harmful Mysticism which has always existed: the dilute cosmic emotion and limp spirituality which hangs, as it were, on the skirts of the true seekers of the Absolute and brings discredit on their science." [13]

"Now the education which tradition has ever prescribed for the Mystic consists in the gradual development of an extraordinary faculty of concentration, a power of spiritual attention." [14]

All the powers of the soul must be gathered and concentrated upon "one point." "Cease," says Boehme, "but from thine own activity steadfastly fixing thine eye upon *one point.* . . . For this end gather in all thy thoughts and by faith press into the Center, laying hold upon the Word of God which is infallible and which hath called thee. Be thou obedient to this call and be silent before the Lord, sitting

[13] Underhill: *Mysticism,* p. 359. [14] *Ibid.*: p. 360.

alone with him in thine inmost and most hidden cell, thy mind being centrally united in itself and attending his will in the patience of hope." [15]

Just as attention was called to the danger, in the Purgative stage, of running into the extremes of asceticism and self-mutilation, so here we should be warned of another common exaggeration which has often brought Mysticism into disrepute. There is danger that this Quiet degenerate into or be mistaken for Quietism. One is the active state of spiritual receptiveness, the other is mere spiritual laziness—"a half-hypnotic state of passivity." Ruysbroek has sternly condemned this perversion. "It is important that we should know,

[15] Boehme: *Dialogue of the Super-sensual Life,* p. 56.

"So being beaten to it, by constant sense, and daily experience, that it is not by our willing or running, according to our wisdom and strength, that we can attain anything; but by God's showing mercy to us in Christ; we therefore daily wait at the posts of God's heavenly wisdom, to feel the gate of mercy and tender love opened to us, and mercy and love flow in upon us, whereby we may and daily do, obtain what our hearts desire and seek after, blessed be the Lord forever." [Isaac Penington: *Horæ Mysticæ,* p. 72.]

"In time of strong temptation, desertion and desolation it is necessary for thee to get close into thy centre, that thou mayest only look at and contemplate God, who keeps His throne and His abode in the bottom of thy soul." [Molinos: *Horæ Mysticæ,* p. 116.]

denounce and crush all quietism. These quietists remain in a state of utter passivity; in order that they may more tranquilly enjoy their false repose they abstain from every interior and exterior activity. Such a repose is treason to God, a crime of *lèse-majesté*. Quietism blinds a man, plunging him into that ignorance which is not superior, but inferior to all knowledge; such a man remains seated within himself, useless and inert. This repose is simply laziness and this tranquillity is forgetfulness of God, one's self and one's neighbor. It is the exact opposite of the divine peace, the opposite of the peace of the Abyss, of that marvelous peace which is full of activity, full of affection, full of desire, full of seeking, that burning and insatiable peace which we pursue more and more after we have found it. Between the peace of the heights and the quietism of the depths there is all the difference that exists between God and a mistaken creature." [16]

If we have at all understood what is meant by Recollection and Quiet, or if we should attempt to put these into practice, we should find, perhaps to our surprise, that what we had at-

[16] Quoted in Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 385, from condensation by Hello.

tained to was Prayer in its highest form. It is not the petitionary side of prayer, but it has behind and through it all the intense longing for God. Prayer is asking, but it is more largely receiving; it is talking with God, but if we would be acceptable conversationalists we must be good listeners, and to listen for God is to be greatly rewarded.

Before leaving this step in the Mystic Way we must touch on some of its results, which have received from many more attention than they deserve. The whole matter of Contemplation, because it is largely composed of concentration, of course carries with it results psychical and psychological, which we know to be associated with concentration. It is possible to let go all hold of the outer world, to be actually lost in thought, a state made familiar by hypnotism. Intense absorption upon one object or idea may lead to physical trance or catalepsy, complete and rigid anesthesia. I need hardly remind you that while this may accompany the Mystic's contemplation, it is no part of it. It may accompany anybody's contemplation say, of his navel, and is equally important and useful. By itself it has no spiritual value. As Godfernaux says, it is only "the extreme

form of a state which must be classed among the ordinary accidents of conscious life." [17]

This accounts for the common use of symbols to stimulate the Mystic's attention and so to cause the ecstasy. For each some special thing or act is used as the help towards gaining the vision or the trance. The Holy Communion would do this for St. Catherine of Siena, while St. Francis of Assisi and many others would gaze upon the Crucifix. Boehme was sent into a trance by looking at the reflection of the light seen on a copper kettle. The reason these states of ecstasy and rapture have bulked so large in the history of Mysticism is because its subjects have been of such intense nature that in them they have been most extraordinarily induced; and in many of them they have been valued above their real worth. They have not realized their earthly origin and have forgotten how easy it is for the starving to see visions, whether their fasting be voluntary and for righteousness' sake, or involuntary on a raft in mid-ocean. Nevertheless they do have their value, and properly criticised, must be admitted to have great importance. But this comes not from the ecstasy itself, but from its after

[17] As quoted in Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 431.

effects. It must be known by its fruits. "It is all the difference between a healthy appetite for nourishing food and the morbid craving for garbage. The same organs of digestion are used in satisfying both; yet he would be a hardy physiologist who undertook to discredit all nutrition by a reference to its degenerate forms." [18]

The same person may have two trances, and one be healthful, exalting, and exhilarating, and the other be enfeebling and morbid. "For I tell thee truly that the Devil hath his contemplatives as God hath his." [19]

The ecstasy of which we are speaking is not only physical and psychological, a natural thing working upon something given, like an idea in the mind or a crucifix before the eyes, and which can give the subject nothing more than he had before, but it is an enhancement of the

[18] Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 432.

"Thus, when the mystic eye is pure it sees in God only such things as add to the moral and rational life of humanity, according to the degree in which the Absolute is infused in the consciousness. In the end it is Reason which must give its seal of approval to the results of Inspiration. In what other way could we distinguish those results from the inferior suggestions which Desire often imposes on the consciousness, under cover of the Good?" [Récéjac: *The Bases of the Mystic Knowledge*, p. 54.]

[19] Hilton: *Scale of Perfection*, p. 216.

subject's receptivity, and the means by which, through the unification of the whole personality, reason, love and will, new and higher revelations may be received. It is the completion of the effort, "the blind intent of stretching" toward God, the single point of contact with God at the "apex" of the soul, the most exalted act of perception of which our nature is capable.

What the object is which is perceived, what the vision is, or what the voice heard, the Mystic who has had this experience can rarely tell us. Even St. Paul, with all his powers of expression, hid behind the statement that it was not "lawful" to utter what he had seen in the third Heaven. The vision is sudden, overwhelming, ineffable. The Mystic who tries to tell of it stumbles with the load of the multitude of symbols he is obliged to use. St. Augustine says: "My mind withdrew its thought from experience, extracting itself from the contradictory throng of sensuous images that it might find out what that light was wherein it was bathed. . . . And thus, with the flash of one hurried glance, it attained to the vision of *That Which Is.*" [20]

[20] *Confessions,* Book VII, Chap. XVII.

"When the soul, forgetting itself, dwells in that radiant darkness, it leaves all its faculties and all its qualities," as St. Bernard has said. "And this more or less completely, according to whether the soul—whether in the body or out of the body—is more or less united to God. This forgetfulness of self is, in a measure, a transformation in God, who then becomes, in a certain manner, all things for the soul, as the Scripture saith. In this rapture the soul disappears, but not entirely. It acquires, it is true, certain qualities of divinity, but does not actually become divine. To speak in the common language, the soul is rapt by the divine power of the resplendent being above its natural faculties into the nakedness of the Nothing." [21]

"My desire follows and pursues, but the finite can never attain to the infinite. Nevertheless, though there remains an invincible diversity between us, the law of Jesus promises and shows us the eternal fruition of his divinity. There are persons who have an experimental knowledge of God. Is it any wonder if joy completely breaks them down?" [22]

[21] Suso: *Life*, Chap. LV.
[22] Ruysbroek: *Mirror*, p. 79.

I could quote many more such passages. But even their authors know they could not tell us. We must go where they have been, if we would see what they saw. They cannot tell us, but we need not therefore doubt the fact they tell us of. "But these most excellent and divine workings in the soul whereby God doth manifest himself, man can in no wise speak or even stammer." [23]

V. I hope you have noted all along the approach to the fifth step in the Mystic Way which we have now reached. The Illumination is now a fact. First, dimly longed for, then laboriously prepared for, negatively by purification and positively by introspection and concentration and prayer. God is found within. And as the seeing eye makes all the world it sees, yellow if jaundiced, glowing with beauty if in perfect health, so one of the first results of Illumination is the illumination of the outer world with the "light that never was on sea or land."

Eckhart was before Tennyson in saying: "The meanest thing that one knows in God—for instance, if one could understand a flower as it has its Being in God—that would be a

[23] Angela da Foligno: *Book of Divine Consolation*, p. 189.

higher thing than the whole world." "And the bodily sight stinted, but the spiritual sight dwelled in my understanding and I abode with reverent dread, joying in that I saw." [24]

But more truly, as our study has shown us, must the illumination be within. The Mystic,

[24] Juliana of Norwich: *Revelations of Divine Love,* Ch. VIII.

"We were saying then:—If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the phantasies of earth, and waters and air; hushed too, the heavens; and the very soul hushed unto herself, and pass beyond herself by not thinking of self; hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every language and every sign, and utterly hushed whatever exists only to pass away; since, if any should hear, all these are saying, 'We made not ourselves, but He made us that abideth forever'; if, having said this, they then were to be silent, having roused our ear to Him who made them, and He alone were to speak, not by them, but by Himself, that we might hear His word, not through tongue of flesh, not through voice of angel, not through sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but were to hear Him whom in these we love, His very self without these; and even as we now stretch out ourselves, and in rapid thought, touch that Eternal Wisdom that abideth over all, if this could be continued, and other visions of kind far unlike, be withdrawn, and this one catch up, and absorb, and bury its beholder amidst inward joys, so our unending life might be such as was that moment of understanding for which we sighed: would not this be to *enter into the joy of the Lord?* [St. Augustine: *Confessions,* Bk. IX, 10.]

"I felt my face must have shone like that of Moses. I had a general feeling of buoyancy. It was the greatest joy it was ever my lot to experience." [Starbuck: *Psychology of Religion,* p. 120.]

by contemplation, attains to a "Vision of the Heart" which means more to him than anything he can see with his eyes.[25]

Thus this vision fills the whole being, for some it is large and light and dazzling, but always the personality to whom the illumination comes is preserved. There is as yet no absorption of the finite by the Infinite, no "flight of the alone to the Alone."

But the illumination varies with different persons, and at times even with the same person. Sometimes all is light;[26] again, it is a knowledge of the deep things of God;[27] or

[25] "And being thence admonished to return to myself, I entered with Thy guidance into my inmost self, and I was enabled to do so, for Thou wert my Helper. And I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul (such as it was), above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the Light Unchangeable: not this common light, which shines for all flesh; nor as it were a greater of the same kind, as though the brightness of this should shine out more and more brightly, and with its greatness take up all space. Not such was this light, but other, yea, far other from all these. Nor was it above my soul, as oil is above water, nor yet as heaven above earth: but higher than I, because It made me; and I below it, because I was made by It. He that knoweth the Truth, knoweth what that Light is; and he that knoweth It, knoweth eternity." [St. Augustine: *Confessions,* Book VII, Chap. X.]

[26] Dante: *Paradiso,* XXXIII, 82.

[27] Angela da Foligno.

again it is small and intimate, as with Mother Juliana of Norwich.[28]

In every case, what comes to the soul is revelation and strength and enrichment, and is felt as such. By them the light is tested, the true distinguished from the false, and the soul, "humbled yet exultant," is made ready for the still further pursuit of its aim, communion with God.

VI. But in between comes the next stage in the Mystic Way, called Negation, or by some, "The Dark Night of the Soul." Here again we find the state a common one among Christians, only here, as before, what distinguishes it is its greater intensity. It is a common psychological law, that of reaction. As Starbuck says: "It is one of the best established laws of the nervous system that it has periods of exhaustion, if exercised continuously in one direction, and can only recuperate by having a period of rest." [29]

All good Christians have to complain of periods of "dryness in prayer," or of peculiar openness to temptation when their spiritual life seems to be at a low ebb. And if the ordinary

[28] *Revelations of Divine Love*, p. 204.
[29] Starbuck: *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 24.

Christian's weak experiences of God can cause such after-fatigue, what must be the intensity of the Mystic's loss of all he held most dear and counted on most certainly? It is not merely to be thought of as physical or psychological, which are, of course, the foundations, but we must remember that there comes the sense of a real spiritual loss. The hold on God is loosened, the dreadful thought takes possession of the soul that it is abandoned of God, the horror as of those who think they have committed the "unpardonable sin." This is the utmost depth to which the soul can be brought. It was hard enough to break away from the Imperfect in the Purgative stage. It is far harder now to feel the loss of the Perfect. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But in this state there are other feelings which depress nearly as much. There is, as I have said, the enfeeblement, the lassitude, the "aridity" which is so hard to bear—a spiritual "ennui"—which is as real as physical fatigue, and this weakness attacks the will. Temptations seem to come in almost overwhelming force. "I had thought of all the sins," says Mme. Guyon, "though without committing them; and these thoughts seemed to my mind to be realities, because I

felt that my heart was occupied by created things." And Santa Teresa, in her quaint self-depreciation and sense of humor, says: "The Devil then sends so offensive a spirit of bad temper that I think I could eat people up." These and many others are the forms by which we recognize the Negative state. It is not clearly defined, nor does it appear always at this definite place. The alternations of hope and fear, of light and darkness, have appeared all along the Way. But here the alternations are more intense and trying. We are drawing near the close, the soul is almost ready for the last step, which is Union. And here this trial has its moral, its spiritual purpose. Heretofore, with all its purification, the soul has been itself; with all its illumination and joy, it has been the self which has enjoyed. Now it must give up its very selfhood, claiming nothing, owning nothing, content, if need be, to be swallowed up in God. It is not willing acceptance of a duty, as in the second step. It reaches deeper, as much as the words, "Not my will, but Thine, be done," are deeper than "I must work the works of Him that sent me."

"Although the exercise of the will is an important element in Conversion, we are con-

fronted with the paradox that in the same persons who strive toward the higher life, *self surrender* is often necessary before the sense of assurance comes. The personal will must be given up. In many cases relief persistently refuses to come until the person ceases to resist or to make an effort in the direction he desires to go." [30]

Thus Negation, you see, is really a forward, not a backward, step. It is the removing of the last vestige of self and self will, which are the only remaining barriers between the soul and God, and thus are the last steps to be taken before the soul can feel itself "oned" with God.

VII. It will not be necessary here to attempt a description at second hand of what is meant by the union of the soul with God as understood by the Mystics. If we cannot gain the experience for ourselves, there is only one way, and that is to let the Mystics tell us, in their own words; and here even their words fail them; they know, as we have seen, even as far as their Illumination, how feeble any description is. As Myers has interpreted St. Paul's "unlawful":

[30] Starbuck: *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 113.

"O could I tell ye surely would believe it!
O could I only say what I have seen!
How should I tell or how can ye receive it,
How, till he bringeth you where I have been?"

I would only call your attention to the common error of attributing to all Mystics the extreme view of some regarding the absorption of the soul in union, the danger which so many come perilously near, of Pantheism. Many expressions, taken by themselves, lend color to this view and have brought much discredit upon Mysticism. But a careful study will show that it is a mistake. Such statements as are condemned in the Mystics may be found in many theologians who are not Mystics. Clement of Alexandria says: "It is, then, the greatest of all lessons to know one's self, for if one knows himself he will know God, and knowing God he will be made like God." [31]

"From him there began the interweaving of divine and human nature in order that the human, by communion with the divine, may rise to be divine, not in Jesus alone, but in all those who not only believe but enter upon the life

[31] *Pædagogus*, Book. III, Chap. I.

which Jesus taught." [32] And even Athanasius says: "He became flesh that we might be made capable of receiving Divinity." Does Eckhart, the Mystic, go any farther when he writes: "Our Lord says to every loving soul, 'I became Man for you. If you do not become God for me, you do me wrong' "? What they mean is explained by the oft-used simile of Boehme:

"I give you an earthly similitude of this. Behold a bright flame, possibly of *iron,* which of itself is dark and black. The fire so penetrateth and shineth through the iron that it giveth *light.* Now the iron does not *cease to be;* it is iron still; and the source (or property) of the fire *retaineth* its own propriety: it doth not take the iron into it, but it penetrateth (and shineth) through the iron; and it is iron then as well as before, *fire* in itself, and so also is the source (or property) of the *fire.* In such a manner is the soul set in the Deity; the Deity penetrateth through the soul and dwelleth in the soul, yet the soul doth not comprehend the Deity, but the Deity comprehendeth the soul, but *doth not alter it* (from being a soul), but only giveth it the divine source (or property) of the majesty." [33]

[32] Origen: *Contra Celsum,* III, 28.
[33] Boehme: *The Three-Fold Life of Man,* p. 190.

"To enjoy God without intermediary: this is what the spirit longs for, naturally and supernaturally, with a supreme desire. But even if the divine union be effected without medium we must understand that God and the creature can never be confounded. Union can never become confusion. The distinction remains forever inviolable." [34]

Nay, so far from Pantheism is this idea of union that the Mystics claim that they are in this gaining and not losing; gaining complete freedom, gaining at last the perfection of their own personality, finding self by losing it. This may be paradoxical, but it is not pantheistic.[35]

"The union of the soul with God is far more inward than that of the soul and body.

[34] Ruysbroek: *Mirror of Eternal Salvation,* p. 24.

[35] "And for that that I would that thou knew what manner of working it is that knitteth man's soul to God, and that maketh it one with Him in love and accordance of will, after the word of Saint Paul saying thus: *Qui adhæret Deo unus spiritus est cum illo;* that is to say: 'Who so draweth near to God,' as it is by such a reverent affection touched before, 'he is one spirit with God.' That is, though all that God and he be two and sere in kind, nevertheless yet in grace they are so knit together that they are but one in spirit; and all this is for onehead of love and accordance of will; and in this onehead is the marriage made between God and the soul, the which shall never be broken, though all that the heat and the fervour of this work cease for a time, but by a deadly sin." [*The Cell of Self-Knowledge,* pp. 87-88.]

"Now I might ask, how stands it with the soul that is lost in God? Does the soul find herself or not? To this will I answer as it appears to me, that the soul finds herself in the point, where every rational being understands itself with itself. Although it sinks and sinks in the eternity of the Divine Essence, yet it can never reach the ground. Therefore God has left a little point wherein the soul turns back upon itself and finds itself, and knows itself to be a creature." [36]

To gain this union, which is not confusion, there must at least be "a point of contact." To the study of that point we will turn in the next lecture and ask, Where and how do God and man meet?

SUGGESTED READING

STARBUCK: *The Psychology of Religion.* Walter Scott, Ltd. 1900.

GRANGER: *The Soul of a Christian.* The Macmillan Co. 1900.

STEVEN: *The Psychology of the Christian Soul.* Hodder & Stoughton.

AMES: *The Psychology of Religious Experience.* Houghton, Mifflin Co. 1910.

COE: *The Spiritual Life.* Eaton & Mains. 1900.

UNDERHILL: *Mysticism.* E. P. Dutton & Co. 1911.

[36] Eckhart: *Life, Light and Love,* Inge, pp. 14-15.

III

THE MEETING POINT

We have studied the mystic yearning and the mystic way—man longing for God, and man seeking God. From all that has been said so far it may begin to look as though we thought that man, by his searching, might find out God, whereas we believe, with Job and John, that man cannot.[1] The man's desire and will must be active; there is a path for the prodigal which, if he will take, will lead him home, but we must never forget that to God belongs the priority.[2] The longing itself is fundamental, just because it is implanted. Deep calleth unto deep because originally they were one. The home is behind the prodigal as well as before him. What he really means to say is, "I will arise and go back to my father." And so he does, but not only is the

[1] Job 11:7, 8, 9; John 1:18.
[2] Phillips Brooks: *Sermons*, Vol. V. p. 40.

father behind his start, he runs to meet his son before he arrives.

In other words, here, at the heart of Mysticism, we meet the heart of the mystery of God's revelation of himself. How does man find God? He doesn't. God finds him. There is an infinite desire in the Father's heart for his child, and an omnipotent will to accomplish that desire. God and man, then, are working toward each other. It is their prior inherent relationship which creates the desire and which guarantees its satisfaction. We must ask now, Where is the Meeting Point? The search being mutual, man cannot be utterly passive. He must at least fit himself to meet God. The steps we have discussed in the last lecture have this for their purpose, but when we come to study them carefully we discover one which stands out as the distinctive mark of Mysticism. This is the fourth step, which is called Contemplation. In a sense, this is an exercise of the mind, and in another sense, as we shall see, it implies some faculty of the mind which is at least not the logical faculty and which is even yet a mysterious and little known part of us.

I have said that Mysticism implies the whole

man. Religion, Christianity, Mysticism, all are not slices of life, but touch and make demands on every faculty man possesses. I know it is unfashionable to make hard and fast distinctions, and yet the old-fashioned names Feeling, Will, and Intellect are useful in distinguishing and discussing certain functions of ourselves about which we can at least think separately. And certainly Mysticism is not the exercise of some unique faculty which is not common to all men, but peculiar to a few specially endowed souls. It is rather, as I have indicated, the exercise of the ordinary man's faculties to their utmost; the most intense desire, the strongest will and the keenest intellectual pursuit; that is, it is the combination and co-ordination of the whole personality.

In the pursuit of ends the order is that which I have given. Even in the ordinary man's life, the desire for some good, the eager out-going willing to get it, and then the criticism and control of the mind is the usual succession. We have spoken in the first lecture of the part desire plays in Mysticism. It is fundamental. No one who does not long intensely can be a Mystic, and the longing is necessary to move the will. As Aristotle says: "The intellect

by itself moves nothing." Thus urged on by desire, the will decides to act, and "where there's a will there's a way." So in our second lecture we spoke of the Way by which the will endeavors to gain its end. But everything so far is preparatory. The longing gives the impetus; then comes the glimpse of the goal, and then the defining of the purpose of the will into some channel commanded by God, the readjustment of the life on a new plane which we call Conversion. Repentance and Purgation are acts of the will. All this, as I have said, is preparatory. It is also common to the Christian life of every man. It is when we come to the middle step of the Seven we have described that we find ourselves at the heart of the question. The secret of Mysticism lies here: it claims to have discovered the meeting place where God and Man see face to face, where the union so long sought and in so many directions, is alone found to be real and satisfying. While it is still perfectly true that the whole man, every part and faculty, must be employed, even to hands and feet, we are to think now of this one faculty which the Mystic, above all men, has learned to train and use, a faculty known to be a reality itself because by

its use real objective effects follow. It is claimed also to be a faculty resident in all men and not an endowment of a few geniuses; a faculty which we need not name yet, but which we will describe simply as that organ by which it seems that man can get most easily and most perfectly into communication with God. It is this which we must now study.

In the first place, the Mystics say that we find God within us, "Verily the kingdom of God is within you, and whosoever knoweth himself shall find it." [3] It is in the deep of our own nature that we feel God. Touch is the primal sense. We don't look like him, we don't think like him, we don't act like him, but we do feel him and respond to his touch, where alone spirit with spirit can meet in the inmost recesses of our own nature, in that part of us we call familiarly our soul, and about which we know so little.

Men have been trying in all ages to find God. They have tried in many directions and by many methods. They have used telescopes, and said that the undevout astronomer was mad. They have used microscopes and got up

[3] Oxyrhynchus Logia. 10, in Bernhard Pick. *Paralipomena*, p. 37.

ingenious arguments from design in Nature implying an ingenious Designer. Then again they have looked within as far as their brains, and concocted interesting and complicated intellectual reasons why God must exist, thinking out proofs of a probable God; and then they have gone outside once more and endeavored to find God by doing his will, leading lives of strenuous activity, of philanthropic work, going on crusades to redeem the city of Jerusalem, or plunging into social work.

Certainly, as God is everywhere, we cannot go anywhere, inside or outside, without finding glimpses of him, at least. But it is as certainly true that there is no complete satisfaction by any or all of these ways. Everything that comes to us from our five senses or our brains, or our outward activity, must report at once back of these to our inmost selves—nothing is ours until it touches our hearts. The eye sees no God in the farthest star, nor through the strongest microscope. It sees only something which, when it gets back to the God in the heart, connects itself there with the only true idea of God, and then carries back God in the "mind's eye" to the farthest star or to the smallest atom, and sees *then* that they belong

together and prove each other. To the man, astronomer or ploughman, who has felt no God in himself, the heavens will always seem empty. "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he," and so, we may add, is the whole universe—to him.

Now while I do not deny that there are some aspects of God which may be seen by the eye, and some which may be heard by the ear, and some which the mind of man can entertain and reason upon, I do say that only at some point within us can we come into complete and satisfactory contact with the Father of Spirits. There our likeness to him seems to be complete. It is there, and there alone, that we find ourselves made in his image; there he can reveal himself to us; there is the seat of what we call Inspiration—the naked and unashamed conversation with God in the cool of the day which we wanderers from Eden are always trying to regain. So while we will not disparage the other ways, we will consider it as settled that the descent into our own spirits is at the same time the ascent to God. For these are the words of Tertullian, followed later by Albertus Magnus, who says: "To mount to God is to enter into one's self, for he who inwardly entereth and intimately penetrateth into himself

gets above and beyond himself and surely mounts up to God."

We do not have to ascend up into Heaven to bring him down to us, nor do we have to go down into Hell to bring him up, because we know that the Lord is very nigh us, even in our hearts. "The kingdom of God is within you." If there is this omnipresence about us and within us which we call God, infinite in holiness and love, then the contention of Mysticism is that its point of contact with us men is at that place within us where we finite bits of his infinitude strive for holiness and yearn for love.

This is the very commonplace of Mysticism. It seems hardly necessary to quote in order to establish it. Royce says: "According to Mysticism, Being is nothing beyond yourself. You even now hold it within you in your heart of hearts." And Rufus M. Jones says: "It has been the contention of Mystics in all ages that God himself is the ground of the soul, and in the depths of their being all men partake of one central divine life." [4] And Schwab writes, in his book on Gerson: "The whole effort of Mysticism is directed . . . to embrace and experience God, his living presence in the in-

[4] *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. xxxii.

nermost soul." While Schuré says that Mysticism is "the art of finding God in one's self." To quote from the Mystics themselves would be to quote from all:

"You need not go to heaven to see God, or to regale yourself with God. Nor need you speak loud, as if He were far away. Nor need you cry for wings like a dove so as to fly to Him. Settle yourself in solitude, and you will come upon God in yourself. And then entreat Him as your Father, and relate to Him your troubles. Those who can in this manner shut themselves up in the little heaven of their own hearts, where He dwells Who made heaven and earth, let them be sure that they walk in the most excellent way: they lay their pipe right up to the fountain." [5]

"See then the mercy and courtesy of Jesus. Thou hast lost Him, but where? Soothly in thy house, that is to say, in thy soul, that if thou hadst lost all thy reason of thy soul by its first sin, thou shouldst never have found Him again; but He left thee thy reason, and so He is still in thy soul, and never is quite lost out of it.

"Nevertheless thou art never nearer Him till

[5] Whyte: *Santa Teresa*, p. 49.

thou hast found Him. He is in thee, though He be lost from thee; but thou art not in Him till thou hast found Him. This is His mercy also, that He would suffer Himself to be lost only there, where He may be found, so that thou needst not run to Rome, nor to Jerusalem to seek Him there, but turn thy thoughts into thy own soul where He is hid, as the Prophet saith: 'Truly Thou art the hidden God,' hid in thy soul, and seek Him there." [6]

"And what hindereth thee that thou canst neither see nor hear Him? Soothly there is so much din and noise in thy heart of vain thoughts and fleshly desires, that thou canst neither see nor hear Him. Therefore put away these unquiet noises, and destroy the love of sin and vanity, and bring into thy heart the love of virtues and full charity, and then shalt thou hear thy Lord speak to thee." [7]

"Where shall I find God? In myself. That is the true Mystical Doctrine. But then I myself must be in a state for Him to come and dwell in me. This is the whole aim of the Mystical Life; and all Mystical Rules in all times and countries have been laid down for putting

[6] Hilton: *The Scale of Perfection,* pp. 71-72.
[7] *Idem,* pp. 72-73.

the soul into such a state. That the soul herself should be heaven, that our Father who is in heaven should dwell in her, that there is something within us infinitely more estimable than often comes out, that God enlarges this 'palace of our soul' by degrees, so as to enable her to receive Himself, that thus He gives her liberty, but that the soul must give herself up absolutely to Him for Him to do this, the incalculable benefit of this occasional but frequent intercourse with the Perfect: this is the conclusion and sum of the whole matter, put into beautiful language by the Mystics. And of this process they describe the steps, and assign periods of months and years during which the steps, they say, are commonly made by those who make them all." [8]

This gathering up of the faculties and fixing them upon the kingdom of God within, which is God, is called Recollection, the recalling of the wandering thoughts, the focusing of the scattered loves, the concentration of the wavering will, all upon "one thing." "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy inner cham-

[8] Cook: *The Life of Florence Nightingale,* Vol. II, pp. 233-234, in her Preface to an unpublished Volume of Selected Readings from the Mystics.

ber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father, who is in secret, and thy Father, who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." [9]

Now if God is to be found within us, the knowledge we have of Him must be entirely personal, incommunicable by any one else, and so directly and intuitively known. There must be some faculty in our nature which is especially adapted to making connection with God. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard"—they cannot. They connect with certain manifestations of God, but the actual touch of God him-

[9] Matt. 6:6.

"'If the mind would fain ascend to the height of science, let its first and principal study be to know itself.'" [Rich. St. Victor, Benj. Minor, LXXV.

"'In the book of Hidden Things it is written,' says Eckhart, 'I stand at the door and knock and wait' . . . thou needst not seek Him here or there: He is no farther off than the door of the heart. There He stands and waits and waits until He finds thee ready to open and let Him in. Thou needst not call Him from a distance; to wait until thou openest is harder for Him than for thee. He needst thee a thousand times more than thou canst need Him. *Thy opening and His entering are but one moment.* 'God,' he says, in another place, 'can as little do without us, as we without Him.' Our attainment of the Absolute is not a one-sided ambition, but a mutual necessity. 'For our natural will,' says Lady Julian, 'is to have God, and the good will of God is to have us; and we may never cease from longing till we have Him in fulness of joy.'" [Underhill: *Mysticism,* p. 159.]

self must come through something in us—call it what you will—made as the eye and ear for its especial purpose. This sense is what the Mystic is reaching to, trying to discover, claiming that he has discovered, and which he, having found, proceeds to use and develop and perfect by the act, or combination of acts, called Contemplation. What is this "sixth sense," personal and interior, by which we men may and must stand face to face with God and re-join our natures to his? Here again we must ask the Mystics themselves. At the start we must take their word [10] although these lectures would not be written if the study were only academic and not in order to find the Mystic experience true for ourselves, to discover in us that faculty and to use it as did the Mystics.

There has never been an age in any religion in which there were not to be found some lives imbued with what we call Mysticism—with a sense of an unseen presence, and the discovery and use of a faculty in man which, so man at least believes, connects with God. This point of contact is what makes religion possible, which even Animism must feel. The Hindu

[10] John 4: 42.

religion is full of it; it sings itself into communion with the Unseen in many of the hymns of Brahminism. It is the very essence of what Socrates and Plato taught. The savage, dreaming of his ancestors, reaching the spirit world through the dream world, both equally real to him; the Indian fakir, wrapping himself into unconsciousness and sitting day after day lost, not in thought, but in the void where thought is not; the visitations of that spiritual monitor whom Socrates called his Dæmon,—are not these experiences and types of Mysticism indicating its essence, however variously and absurdly each subject would explain them? This power, inherent in man's nature, not known or used by all but still universally resident, which connects with God, gives the sense of oneness, of personal union, if not of identity with God, which is of the essence of Mysticism. Elijah, piercing through the whirlwind and the earthquake and the fire until he hears God's voice as "a sound of gentle stillness"; Elisha opening the eyes of the young man that he also might see the vision of the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire; the prophet's inspiration with its clairvoyance and clairau-

dience; St. Paul coming to visions and revelations of the Lord, telling of the experience he had had fourteen years before, "how that he was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter," [11] I could multiply examples were it not superfluous. What do they show? A faculty in man by which he knows intuitively, the reason being in abeyance, truths and facts else incommunicable. And then the Christian church does not have to go outside of itself, to the Neo-platonists, to Plotinus and Jamblichus, to trace the later workings of this same faculty. They belong in the church,—not only to Montanism and the monkish Omphalopsychites and Hesychasts, but to less exaggerated and more orthodox forms. Ignatius says: "Some in the church most certainly have a knowledge of things to come. Some have visions, others utter prophecies and heal the sick by laying on of hands; and others still speak in many tongues, bringing to light the secret things of men and expounding the mysteries of God." Tatian declares that "our virgins at the distaff utter divine oracles, see visions and sing the holy words that are given

[11] II Cor. 12:4.

them"; and Tertullian and many more of the Fathers give the same testimony.

Now my point is this: that these are all manifestations of the principle upon which Mysticism rests, and that because Mysticism is always the same (as Harnack says) we are here getting hold of facts which only to-day are having light thrown on them by the advances of a scientific psychology. It matters not that these psychic phenomena were misunderstood at the time. We are not very clear about them even to-day. As well might we discredit astronomy because it had its origin in astrology, or chemistry because it was preceded by alchemy. All I claim is that these are facts, and that the same facts have persisted, and that they are the basis of whatever truth and power there may be in Mysticism. I am not concerned, as I said, with the theologies men have built on these facts. The mystical theologies are what have brought Mysticism into disrepute in all ages. It is interesting even to-day to study the old astrologers. Averroes and Paracelsus are worthy of more attention than they receive, but if we wish to know the truth about the heavens we go to the latest and best

treatise on astronomy, and that not only explains to us the stars but incidentally explains the old astrologers too. We do not need to believe all that Plotinus and Dionysius the Areopagite have to say about their Mysticism even could we understand it. We accept them as Mystics because they undergo the same experience and build their theories on the same facts which once gave insight and foresight to the prophets, illumined St. Paul on the way to Damascus and St. John in Patmos when he was in the spirit on the Lord's Day, and is to be seen supporting, guiding and inspiring Santa Teresa and Tauler, Fénelon and Fox.

To come closer to the subject before us, let me show you what the Mystics call this faculty before we bring it to the bar of modern psychology. Plotinus is as far back as we need to go. He calls this faculty "another intellect different from that which reasons and is denominated rational." [12] The pseudo-Dionysius, describing the mystical adept, says: "Then is he delivered from all seeing and being seen, and passes into the truly mystical darkness of ignorance, where he excludes all intellectual apprehensions and abides in the utterly Im-

[12] Ennead VI, 9.

palpable and Invisible." [13] St. Francis de Sales, in his Treatise on the Love of God, writing of "The Rest of the recollected soul is its Beloved," says: "It is this sweet calm which S. Teresa calls the prayer of quietude, which is much the same as what she elsewhere calls a sleep of the active powers." [14]

The author of the "Theologia Germanica" gives about the most important statement of all: "Now the created soul of man hath also two eyes; the one has the power of seeing into eternity, the other of seeing into time and the creatures, of perceiving how they differ from each other, of giving life and needful things to the body and ordering and governing it for the best. But these two eyes of the soul of man cannot both perform their work at once, but if the soul shall see with the right eye, then the left eye must close itself and refrain from working, and be as though it were dead. Or if the left eye is fulfilling its office toward outward things,—that is, holding conversation with time and the creatures, then must the right eye be hindered in its working, that is, in its contemplation." [15]

[13] Dionysius: *Mystic Theology*, Cap. I. Section III.
[14] De Sales: *Of the Love of God*, Bk. VI. Chap. VIII.
[15] *Theologia Germanica*. p. 20.

This is what the Mystics themselves say, not of the theory but of the facts and the actual processes:

"Mystical knowledge proceeds not from Wit, but from Experience; it is not invented, but proved; not read, but received; and is therefore most secure and efficacious, of great help, and plentiful in fruit. It enters not into the Soul by the ears, nor by the continual reading of books, but by the abundant infusion of the Holy Spirit, Whose Grace, with most delightful intimacy, is communicated to the meek and lowly." [Molinos: *The Spiritual Guide,* p. 50.]

"Grace never comes in the intelligence or in the will. If it could come in the intelligence or in the will, the intelligence and the will would have to transcend themselves. On this a master says: There is something secret about it; and thereby he means the spark of the soul, which alone can apprehend God. The true union between God and the soul takes place in the little spark, which is called the spirit of the soul. Grace unites not to any work. It is an indwelling and a living together of the soul in God." [Eckhart: *Light, Life and Love.* Inge, pp. 4-5.]

"The union of the soul with God is far more inward than that of the soul and body. Now I might ask, how stands it with the soul that is lost in God? Does the soul find herself or not? To this will I answer as it appears to me, that the soul finds herself in the point, where every rational being understands itself with itself. Although it sinks and sinks in the eternity

of the Divine Essence, yet it can never reach the ground. Therefore God has left a little point wherein the soul turns back upon itself and finds itself, and knows itself to be a creature." [Eckhart: *Light, Life and Love.* Inge, pp. 14-15.]

Will you bear with me a little farther in my quotations, which I think necessary that I may still further explain myself and supplement these old names by more modern authorities? Lotze, in the "Microcosmus," writes: "Within us lurks a world whose form we but imperfectly apprehend, and whose working—when in particular phases it comes under our observation—surprises us with foreshadowings of unknown depths in our own being." [16] And Ribot says: "The ordinary conscious personality is only a feeble portion of the whole psychological personality." [17] I quote again from Max Müller, in his "Science of Religion," who writes : "There is in man a faculty which I call simply the faculty of apprehending the Infinite, not only in religion but in all things, a power independent of sense and reason, a power in a certain sense contradicted by sense and reason, yet I suppose a very real power if

[16] *Microcosmus,* Bk. I. Chap. I. Vol. I. p. 13.
[17] Ribot: *Les Maladies,* etc., p. 122.

we see how it has held its own from the beginning of the world; how neither sense nor reason have been able to overcome it, while it alone is able to overcome both reason and sense." [18] As William James says: "Our normal waking consciousness, as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence, but apply the requisite stimulus and at a touch there they are, in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question,—for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes, though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map." [19]

[18] Quoted in Bjerregaard, *Lectures on Mysticism,* p. 12.

[19] James: *Varieties of Religious Experiences,* p. 388.

"The spiritual is a distinct sphere of the human soul moving from within, having its own organ of knowledge, its own objects, its own method, its own results. As the senses are a

But we really need no fortifying with authorities. Our own lives furnish us with bet-

fundamental endowment of the being, looking out to the external world, so the personality has faculties, moral and spiritual, which have immediate affinities with the spiritual world, which receive impressions from that world, and which become powers in the life through these impressions. The sense of the right, the thirst for a chief good, the instinct of dependence, the strong propension of the reason to find a moral and religious meaning girdling the course of events, are—roughly and popularly speaking—elements of that spiritual side.

"Now though these powers use reason in their latter stages and can always vindicate themselves in the court of reason, they do not work by reasoning. They leap instinctively into exercise by the contact of the personality with another and higher personality." [Smith: *The Magnetism of Christ,* p. 181.]

"And, in like manner, it is maintained there is an apprehension of God and divine things that is independent of that which comes to us in the form of propositions and doctrines, and which may be possessed in fullest measure by the man who could not define or prove a single article of a theological creed. The investigation of the evidences, the analysis and systematic development of the doctrines of religion, may indeed furnish fit occupation for the highest intellects; but it is by no such process that the essence of religion wins its way into the soul. It comes upon the spirit not as a proposition which it has proved, but as a living reality which it immediately and intuitively perceives, as a heavenly melody falling on the ear, as the splendour of an infinite loveliness breaking on the eye of faith." [Caird: *University Sermons,* p. 16.]

"Of all things good and fair and holy there is a spiritual cognizance which precedes and is independent of that knowledge which the understanding conveys." [Caird: *University Sermons,* p. 14.]

ter proofs. What we call our mind is really made up of two parts. The one is the drudge and mentor and director which we know and use, which gets tired and dies; and the other the immeasurably vaster portion which we seldom see and only a little oftener guess we have. Yet it is this unconscious part which is the very tossing ocean which feeds the little fountain of our conscious mind—full of wrecks and argosies and dead faces and the traces of vanished generations, able to connect with the same ocean in other men, able, so we have seen in history and philosophy—nay, do we not know this also from dear experience?—able to connect with God. For have we not known some supreme moment, under great emotion of grief or joy, of intense excitement, of fervent prayer, when what we call self, with all its self-consciousness and self-carefulness, with its hoard of petty maxims reasoned out of a single petty experience—disappears and a new power comes above the threshold of consciousness and takes control? And when it has sunk once more below the threshold we only then discover the bleeding wound or the evidence of some superhuman exertion or the sense of a presence which leaves us tingling,

saying, "Truly God was in this place and I knew it not."

I think I have said enough to support my point that we have here the peculiarity which distinguishes Mysticism from those forms of religion which we call the dogmatic or intellectual, or which we call the ritualistic or institutional.

Beyond or underneath the usual course of the Christian life there is in Mysticism the development and use of a faculty which works best when both mind and will are in abeyance, and which seems to have the power of receiving intimations directly from God. The Mystic is thus in all respects like any other Christian, plus the use of this organ and plus also certain rewards or punishments which flow from its use, such as unusual nervous sensitiveness, extremes of joy or sorrow, an abnormal liability to visions and hallucinations. These are not Mysticism, but its by-products.

We have laid aside the emotions and the will. We have felt that they were preliminary to Mysticism proper, though parts of its process. And we have asked the Mystics to tell us what they thought was their secret. And they have said, with a perfect and positive unanimity, that

they used, in meeting God, a faculty which they could cultivate, which seemed to them to be the deepest and truest part of their personality, and that this faculty seemed to them something distinct from their intellect, something which did not use logical processes; that by it they gained the real knowledge, but gained it not by ratiocination but by intuition; that for its highest working this faculty needed that the ordinary activities of the brain be stopped, and then that through it came to them a knowledge of God, generally ineffable and indescribable, but having enough body to it to be afterward presented to their own intellect to be reasoned on in the usual way. All I can say regarding this is that further definition is at present beyond our powers. This is a practical study and for our purpose it is not necessary to enter the much-debated field of the subconscious. As yet we know too little about it. Few psychologists would deny its existence. They differ very widely in their definition and valuation of it. We are here concerned only with the fact: That by the use of a faculty which is not the logical mind, and is active mostly when that is quiescent, certain truths are received and a positive spiritual com-

munion with God established. I believe that the seat of this faculty lies back in this mysterious field we call the sub-consciousness. It is a large field and it contains much which is both useful and harmful. It is that penumbra of the intellect which Bergson calls Intuition. We are to use our minds to try the spirits, whether they be of God, but I see no reason to doubt, from its effects, that something within us is especially formed to meet with God, and that, like every other organ, it may be cultivated. The only proof that we have it is by using it ourselves, and this each one of us must do if he would know. We know best that we have eyes by seeing things with them. As Hocking says truly: "The misinterpretation of Mysticism here in question is due to the fact that what is a psychological report (and a true one) is taken as a metaphysical statement (and a false one)." [20]

Professor James, than whom is no higher authority, says:

"The subconscious self is nowadays a well-accredited psychological entity; and I believe that in it we have exactly the mediating term required. Apart from all religious considerations, there is actually and

[20] *Mind*, No. 81, p. 42.

literally more life in our total soul than we are at any time aware of. The exploration of the transmarginal field has hardly yet been seriously undertaken, but what Mr. Myers said in 1892 in his essay on the Subliminal Consciousness is as true as when it was first written: 'Each of us is in reality an abiding psychical entity far more extensive than he knows,—an individuality which can never express itself completely through any corporeal manifestation. The Self manifests through the organism; but there is always some part of the Self unmanifested; and always, as it seems, some power of organic expression in abeyance or reserve.' Much of the content of this larger background against which our conscious being stands out in relief is insignificant. Imperfect memories, silly jingles, inhibitive timidities, 'dissolutive' phenomena of various sorts, as Myers calls them, enter into it for a large part. But in it many of the performances of genius seem also to have their origin; and in our study of conversion, of mystical experiences, and of prayer, we have seen how striking a part invasions from this region play in the religious life." [21]

May I interrupt here for one moment to make clearer my own position, that I may not be more misunderstood than is necessary? I am reminded of one of the clearest definitions of Mysticism among the many that are to be found to-day. It is in the Century Dictionary:

[21] James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 511.

"Mysticism and Rationalism represent opposite poles of theology, Rationalism regarding the reason as the highest faculty of man and the sole arbiter in all matters of religious doctrine; Mysticism, on the other hand, declaring that spiritual truth cannot be apprehended by the logical faculty, nor adequately expressed in terms of the understanding."

And yet while this definition is clear as far as it goes, and makes a perfectly true distinction, it is very incomplete, in that it gives nothing to supply the defect of the logical faculty. If "spiritual truth cannot be apprehended by the logical faculty," how *can* it be apprehended? And this is the very secret of Mysticism, which ought to be told, even in a dictionary. The definition only tells us what Mysticism *denies*. That's why it's so clear! Add these words, "that truth can be also received and understood by some function of the subliminal self," call it Intuition, or whatever you please, and we have at least made the definition fuller and more correct, even though the *claim* of the Mystic should prove to be unfounded.

That this is the claim of the Mystic and so necessary to an understanding of him, we have

surely seen. But its relation to Rationalism may not be so clear.

Mysticism is *opposite* to Rationalism but not its *opponent*. Both are necessary to the full and perfect religion of this earth. But nothing is commoner than to see the two set at variance. Nothing is commoner than to see Mysticism classed with mere emotionalism. The subliminal self is the seat of the emotions, as of the true memory. But it has a mental life of its own. "It is not the passive, unreasoning and irresponsive automaton which people have believed it to be." [22] The difficulty, you see, is not the old one, between heart and head, between feeling and knowledge, but between two *kinds* of knowledge. And both are essential, the knowledge which comes through Scholasticism and the knowledge which comes through Mysticism. The one is mediate and proceeds by logic indirectly; the other is immediate and proceeds deductively from a prior suggestion. This is not the time to discuss their relative merits; there is certainly a difference in priority. But you will pardon me if I add, that which is not called for by my argument, that God's nature seems more akin

[22] Hudson: *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, p. 32.

to the mystical side of man's nature. He is Love, not Logic. Omniscience does not ratiocinate, it simply knows, and the soul, made in the image of God, meets God intuitively (however it may rationalize about Him later), so that we must ask it first, not "are your logical processes correct?" but simply, "have you *seen* aright? Have you actually *felt* God?" [23]

[23] "Now, undoubtedly, religious beliefs, new and old, often do present themselves to the minds of individuals in an intuitive and unaccountable way. They may subsequently be justified at the bar of Reason: and yet Reason might never have discovered them for herself. They would never have come into the world unless they had presented themselves at first to some mind or other as intuitions, inspirations, immediate Revelations: and yet (once again) the fact that they so present themselves does not by itself prove them to be true." [Rashdall: *Philosophy and Religion,* p. 136.]

"But just as our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a subconscious region, which alone should yield access to them. The hubbub of the waking iife might close a door which, in the dreamy Subliminal, might remain ajar or open." [James: *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 242.]

"The notion of a subconscious self certainly ought not at this point of our inquiry to be held to *exclude* all notion of a higher penetration. If there be higher powers able to impress us, they may get access to us only through the subliminal door." [*Ibid.,* p. 243.]

"Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what is common and generic, we have in *the fact that the*

And so we come back to the heart of the matter. Leaving for the last lecture any practical lessons we may have found, let us remind ourselves of the point we have reached, the meeting point with God.

The Mystic, that he may see God, get any the least glimpse of him, must prepare himself, and having stripped from him everything that would hinder of sight, hearing, touch, even thought, then he comes to the next and most important step of all, that which stamps him as soon as he takes it, as a Mystic, different in this respect from other creatures; he sits down in this utter nakedness and in silence and without effort at last waits for God to speak in the "still small voice," or to show himself in some vision or to give some touch upon his heart by which he may be known. It is the concentration of all the powers upon "one point." It is the "inward look." In quiet and in silence the soul now attends intently. By concentration all the little sounds have been stilled. The efforts of Recollection to bring the mind and heart and will into harmony have

conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience, which it seems to me, *is literally and objectively true, as far as it goes.*" [*Ibid.*, p. 515.]

succeeded and so relax. The soul is at peace. The busy thoughts are hushed, the unruly will is silenced. The attitude is that of listening. No longer is it content to do. It finds its satisfaction in being, and its being becomes one great receptivity. It can say now, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" and not mistake heavenly sounds for earthly. It is in the ante-room of the Presence. The next move is God's.

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IV

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, HEINRICH SUSO AND MOTHER JULIAN OF NORWICH

HAVING discussed in our previous chapters the Mystic Way, and tried to account for it psychologically, it will be interesting, I think, bearing in mind what we have learned, to proceed now to study these processes in the lives of some sample Mystics and see how they bear out in practice what we have been studying theoretically.

A history of Mysticism is an impossibility. It has no history. It is a religious exercise which occurs sporadically and unexpectedly throughout history. It is an emergence, not an evolution. It appears, like Melchisedec, without a genealogy but with a blessing. For certain purposes, of course, it is helpful to study the Mystics chronologically, but in whatever century we find them we will find St. Martin's words true: "All Mystics speak the same

language and come from the same country."

Mysticism is such a personal thing, relates so much more to eternity than to time, that the student who looks to history, as he should, to discover causes and relations, to see the orderly growth of ideas and institutions, should be told that here he must not expect an ordered evolution. Sometimes the Mystics appear in groups, but just as often they are lonely as well as unexpected figures in the pages of history. There have been periods when we can see an unusual outpouring of the mystical spirit, and we may see, or say, that such is due to a reaction against over-intellectualism or against some tight ecclesiastical organization. Sometimes a low ethical order of things or a time of spiritual dryness will seem to cause a Mystic revival, but just as often it appears with no apparent reason.

And so we may the more readily omit any historical presentation, because our purpose is practical and we can be helped more by selecting some figures of especial interest and studying them, because they are typical of the life and its process which we have been trying to describe.

It is embarrassing to have to choose, and any

choice will seem arbitrary, but I can speak better of those who interest me most, and of all these I think we may gain a wider understanding of the subject if we take two men and one woman, and choose them from different countries and from different centuries. They are also so far removed from each other that we cannot trace any influences acting between them, so that each may stand by itself as a type. I ask you to look with me at St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) and Heinrich Suso of Germany (1300-1365) and Mother Julian of Norwich, in England (1343-1413). We will tell their story and see if it be possible to fit them into the scheme we have already laid down. By seeing our theories translated into life we may understand and practise them the better.

St. Francis, in many traits of his character and in his mode of life, might seem far removed from the typical Mystic of the Middle Ages. Yet for this very reason his Mysticism is brought into clearer relief and is seen, with all its intensity, to be a very human thing. More than any I know he kept himself in closest touch with everything human. His knowledge of men was unusual, and with Na-

ture in her every aspect he had the deepest sympathy. He ordered his followers always to have a plot for flowers in their more useful vegetable gardens, while his love for the birds, especially for the larks, was a passion.[1] His influence over his time and after it was greater than we are even now beginning to realize. He is one of the great men of the world, a man who not only made a deep impression on the life of his time, but one whose influence persists after seven centuries, and who has even now a personal devotion accorded to him which I dare to say is received by no one save by his Master.

It is not to our purpose to study these larger aspects of his character and work. They can be understood only after thorough knowledge of the conditions which he faced. He simply stepped into the midst of everything that was abhorrent to him and brought with him his unflagging courtesy, his joyous temperament, his keen insight and common sense, his love and sympathy, and above all, his desire to be like Christ, and then, like Christ, just went about doing good. I speak of this only in passing, to remind you of what is so often forgot-

[1] *Mirror of Perfection*, p. 170.

ten, that it is not incompatible with true Mysticism to be extremely practical and constantly busy, and sometimes astonishingly influential and successful. We have not time to show how true this is of Francis,—how he influenced art and literature, how be brought a new temper into political life, how he stands to the lepers of Italy as a John Howard to the prisoners of England or a Dorothea Dix to the insane of America, and how, above all, by his institution of the Order of Tertiaries, he undermined and finally did away with the burden of Feudalism in his own land. Our aim in these lectures is different, more personal and interior. I turn to the man himself.

His name was Francis Bernadone, born in Assisi in 1182, son of a rich cloth merchant, his mother probably French, destined to take over his father's business, leader in the gay life of the town, "the best dressed man in Assisi." He was for a time a soldier fighting against Assisi's enemy, Perugia, captured and imprisoned there for a year, the cheeriest man in the dungeon, spending the time in reconciling enmities and singing French chansons, sent home to be taken ill with a fever, where he hovered between life and death for many

weeks,—and then, out of this gay, pleasure-loving, merchant-soldier, St. Francis begins to emerge, simply, quaintly, yet with all the joyousness and sweetness of the former troubadour, now sublimated and spiritualized into the troubadour of God, the knight errant of the Church.

Some people know Francis only as the founder of the great order of Brothers Minor, the Franciscans, perhaps a little more interesting than the rest of the crowd of pallid figures of whose hallucinations and self-inflicted tortures and incredible miracles we read in Golden Legends and Acta Sanctorum. Some people think of him only as a half crazy medieval monk. But he is a Mystic, and all his life is a consistent expression of the Mystic spirit. The steps are easily traced. He had come out of his year's imprisonment and long illness with that sense of something lacking in his life which comes to so many young men and must come to every Mystic. It is the first step in the Mystic Way. And here, as so often we know, the Church failed to fill his need. He was not satisfied with his former life and yet he could see nothing else to do, and so he went back to it again. Once more he was the leader

in processions and dances and banquets, and having the chance to go to war again with a knightly train to take part in some feud in Apulia, he gathered an equipment of princely proportions, never being stinted of money, and started off. But he got no further than Spoleto,[2] where he again fell ill of a fever, and came back, weakened and discouraged, to meet

[2] "When therefore he had gone to Spoleto to set forth on his journey and go into Apulia, he began to ponder somewhat. Yet none the less anxious about his journey, when he had yielded unto sleep, he heard while half asleep one asking him whither he desired to proceed. And when Francis had revealed his whole purpose, he added: 'Which can do the better for thee, the lord or the servant?' And when he answered 'the lord,' that other said again unto him: 'Wherefore then dost thou leave the lord for the servant, and a rich lord for a poor?' And Francis said: 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?' 'Return,' saith He, 'unto thine own country, and it shall be told unto thee what thou shalt do, for the vision that thou hast seen behoveth thee to understand in other wise.' Then, waking, he began earnestly to ponder this vision. And just as in the first vision he had been as it were quite carried out of himself for his great joy, coveting worldly good fortune, so in this vision he withdrew within himself entirely, wondering at its might, and meditating so earnestly that he could sleep no more that night. And so, at early morn, he returned toward Assisi in haste and with gladness and joy exceeding, awaiting the will of the Lord, Who had shown him this thing, and to be told concerning his salvation from himself. Changed in his mind is he now, and refusing to go into Apulia, seeketh to mould himself unto the Divine Will." [Salter: *The Legend of St. Francis,* pp. 15-16.]

the jeers of the young men whose jealousy he had excited. Then for months he wandered about, frequenting a cave near Assisi, attending Masses in the little wayside chapels. The stream of his intense nature was being dammed up, and no one knew when it would break forth. In studying such a life, lived 700 years ago, we must judge it, as far as we can, from the standard of the time. And here we must remember that the Italy of his day was even more intense than it is now. Men then did nothing by halves. They sinned completely and gorgeously. When they turned from sin they became ascetics of the severest and most uncompromising sort. And Francis was a man typical of his time. The popular idea of him as weak and negative is totally wrong. He is of all saints the youngest, most restless, gentle indeed but virile, and when he breaks loose now and hears his call, nothing can stop him and he will stop at nothing. It is vain for us to call him enthusiastic and visionary and laugh at his extravagances. For him and his time it was the only way to express himself, and as the end crowns the work, we must acknowledge that his way succeeded.

For two years he went about trying to find

what his Father's business was. "His friends were making continual efforts to induce him to take up his old habits again. One day he invited them all to a sumptuous banquet. They thought they had conquered and as in old times, they proclaimed him King of the Revels. The feast was prolonged far into the night, and at its close the guests rushed out into the streets, which they filled with song and uproar. Suddenly they perceived that Francis was no longer with them. After long searching they found him far behind, still holding in his hand his sceptre of King of Misrule, but plunged in a revery so profound that he seemed to be rooted to the ground and unconscious of all that was going on. 'What is the matter with you?' they cried, bustling about him as if to awaken him. 'Don't you see he is thinking of taking a wife?' said one. 'Yes,' answered Francis, arousing himself and looking at them with a smile which they did not recognize, 'I am thinking of taking a wife more beautiful, more rich, more pure than you could ever imagine.' " [3] He was carrying over his troubadour spirit into his new life, and his Lady Paramour was to be the Lady Poverty.

[3] Sabatier: *The Life of St. Francis*, p. 22.

But as yet he had not known how to declare his love for her. He went to Rome and sat among the beggars on the steps of St. Peter's. He gave away much money and more sympathy. He thought he could remain rich and yet understand the poor. He really cared for them, but for one class he had an instinctive and deep-rooted repugnance. Others agreed with him, for the lepers were banished from all social intercourse. Theirs was a living death. The Church even had a solemn and terrible service for their seclusion from mankind. To this sensitive and fastidious young man even the sight of a leper was loathsome. One day, riding his richly-caparisoned horse around Assisi he came suddenly upon a leper and he wheeled his horse and spurred him away in horror. Then the dam broke. Here was the renunciation, the hardest act of self-sacrifice. He turned his horse and went back and gave the leper all he had of money, and then knelt and kissed his hand, and rode away a free man. Years afterward, on the eve of his death, he wrote his will and as he cast a backward glance over the way by which he had been led, he sees that this incident was the real turning point of his life. He says, as he begins his last

Testament: "The Lord gave to me, Brother Francis, thus to begin to do penance; for when I was in sin it seemed to me very bitter to see lepers and the Lord himself led me amongst them, and I showed mercy to them, and when I left them, that which had seemed to me bitter was changed for me into sweetness of body and soul."

This was his conversion, the third step in the Way, but still what to do with himself was not clear. He had not heard the personal call. He dreamed that he was to repair the Church. He did not realize the largeness of the work, so he began to repair, with his own hands, the little chapel of San Damiano on the outskirts of Assisi. To its priest he gave all his personal property. This done he built a hut by the side of the still smaller chapel of the Portiuncula, a little farther from the town, and began to repair that. Attending Mass in it one morning he heard the words in the Gospel for the day: "Take neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, nor shoes nor staves." Then suddenly it flashed upon him that he had found his orders, the clear directions from Christ himself as to what he should do. He threw away every-

thing and put on the commonest dress of the poorest Apennine peasant. It was the taking of the Franciscan habit, the gray tunic and the rough cord. It was the real founding of the Order. And its rule was that simple verse. Soon Bernard of Quintavalle, a rich and prominent man of Assisi, and Pietro, a peasant, decided to attach themselves to him and to follow his example. He took them to a church and opened the Gospel and read the verse to them and said: "Brethren, this is our life and our Rule and that of all who may join us. Go, then, and do as you have heard." It was all as simple as that. Other men came to join these three, and then more. Then a real but still simple Rule was set forth, and they journeyed to Rome to have it approved by the Pope. So the order of Brothers Minor grew, not out of a paper constitution but as the direct outcome and influence of a man's life. It was all summed up in doing what St. Francis did, and he, we know, desired only to do what Christ did. In his life we modern Christians find some very shocking and to us unnecessary imitations, but we see also a very sane and sensible man doing them, and they certainly

open up some very heart-searching questions.[4]

Asceticism is belief in pain and want for their own sakes, as agreeable in themselves to God and as laying up grace in Heaven. Nowhere do we find St. Francis laying any stress upon this thought. These things,—poverty, cold, nakedness, hunger, contumely—are means by which the man who would be free dominates the tyrant within.[5]

Both his poverty and his asceticism are so spontaneous and joyous that they are forever taken out of the gloomy category of Monasticism. He could not himself be free and yet be rich. Some men can, but he had tried it and had failed. He was no child of the proletariat, railing at those who were better off. He did not set himself to be the judge of the rich, but for him there was a royal road to freedom of spirit and that was to be poor, utterly and entirely poor. Being an adventurer, a knight errant, he must carry no such burden. He must have his hands, his heart, and above all, his soul, free. And here his aim was joy as much as that of any epicurean. Cheerfulness was blessed and sadness damned

[4] *The Little Flowers,* Chap. VIII.
[5] *Mirror of Perfection,* Chap. XXVII and Chap. XCVI.

by him. To be sure, in his youthful zeal he rather overdid the mauling of his body, and he confessed this himself. Eager and keen, he spurred and flogged this "Brother Ass," as he called his body, and fed it sparely, ever unsatisfied until he had made it willing and swift and hardy. But this step we call Purgation was for him only an exhilarating knightly exercise.

All this joyousness of nature and naturalness and absolute freedom from anything that was morbid make Francis' life singularly free from that stage we have called Negation, that Dark Night of the Soul which shrouds so many sometimes for many years. So we may thankfully omit that from our study of this man and be glad that he shows us how we may escape. Thus we come to the end when the longing to be like Christ with which he started has its symbolical fulfillment in the reception of the Stigmata in the solitude of the Mount of Alvernia. He saw his vision and heard these words: "And as he thus marveled it was revealed by him that appeared to him that by divine Providence this vision had been shown in such form to the end that he might understand that not by the martyrdom of the

body but by the enkindling of his mind must he needs be wholly transformed into the express image of Christ crucified in that glorious apparition." [6] Then he came down from the Mount trying to conceal from his nearest friends the "marks of the Lord Jesus." [7]

The union was very nearly complete, his goal almost reached. The wracked body could bear no more and he failed rapidly. His friends tell the story with simple pathos:

"And having said this he was carried to St. Mary of the Angels, where, having completed forty years of his age and twenty years of perfect penitence, he, in the year of our Lord 1227, on the 4th of the Nones of October, passed away to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he loved with his whole heart, with his whole mind, his whole soul, his whole strength, his most ardent desire and fullest affection, following him most perfectly, running after him most sweetly, and at the last reaching him most gloriously, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen." [8]

Turn we now to another sample of the same

[6] *The Little Flowers,* p. 192.

[7] St. Bonaventura: *The Life of St. Francis,* pp. 139-40. *The Little Flowers,* p. 185.

[8] *The Mirror of Perfection,* Chap. CXXIV.

spirit, another troubadour, but of the heavier Teutonic sort, living more than a century later than St. Francis.

Heinrich Suso was born at Ueberlingen, near Constance, on St. Benedict's Day, A. D. 1300. He was well born on both sides of his house, the families being both noble and ancient. From his devotion to his mother he called himself by her name, Seuss, Latinized into Suso, his father's name being von Berg. He became a Dominican monk, entering the monastery at Constance when he was 13 years old. Then he was transferred to Cologne, where he studied diligently at the University. "While there he made such great progress in learning that he was about to be promoted to the degree of Doctor of Theology, but he was forbidden to accept this honor by a voice from God within him, saying:—'Thou knowest well enough already how to give voice to God and to draw other men to him by thy preaching.' From that time forth he began to preach with great zeal and fervor and to devote himself to the conversion of sinners and the guidance of souls along the highest paths of mystical perfection. At length, after many years of unceasing labors and sufferings he died at

Ulm, on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in 1365, and was buried in the cloister of the Dominican convent in that city." [9]

He has left us two books from which we must draw all our knowledge of his life save the bare facts just recorded. He wrote his own life, or rather his experiences related to his friend Elizabeth Stagelin were set down by her and then surreptitiously circulated. "Later on, when he found out this ghostly theft, he reproved her for it and forcing her to give up to him all the writing, he burnt up all of it that was there." When, however, the rest of it was given to him and he was going to treat it in like manner, he was stopped by a heavenly message from God forbidding it. Thus what follows remained unhurt, for the most part, just as she had written it with her own hand. Many good instructions were also added to it by him after her death in her name.[10]

Of this book Inge, in his Bampton Lectures (p. 173) says: "In his old age, shortly before his death in 1365, he published the history of his life, which is one of the most interesting

[9] *The Life of the Blessed Henry Suso.* Translator's Preface, p. xxxi.

[10] Suso: *Life*, p. 5.

and charming of all autobiographies. Suso's literary gift is remarkable. Unlike most ecstatic Mystics who declare on each occasion that "tongue cannot utter" their experiences, Suso's store of glowing and vivid language never fails. The hunger and thirst of the soul for God and the answering love of Christ manifested in the inner man have never found a more pure and beautiful expression." A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (for October, 1896), says: "In Suso's narrative the spirit of this century is pictured with a vividness and reality Froissart himself, his contemporary, does not surpass."

He wrote himself "The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom." Its origin was a series of a hundred short meditations on the Passion which he had vowed to make. These form a short appendix to the book and are not very valuable, but in writing them he says: "He gained many a bright inspiration of divine truth whereof these meditations were a cause, and between him and the Eternal Wisdom there sprang up a tender intercourse." [11]

The result he gives us is in dramatic form. He is the Servitor and Eternal Wisdom talks

[11] *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*, p. 21.

with him and answers his questions. The conversation is sweet. The servant treats his Master with reverence, yet with a quaint and half humorous boldness. The answers of the Eternal Wisdom show an intimate acquaintance with the writings of Dionysius and Thomas Aquinas and Suso's master, Eckhart. But they are softened and sweetened and made human by passing through his own heart and being expressed in his beautiful language. But we turn away from these. We must trace, in our study of both the Eternal Wisdom and the Life together the various steps in his Mystic experience which for us are more important than the theological discussions.

"The first beginning of the Servitor's perfect conversion to God took place when he was in his eighteenth year. And though he had worn the religious habit for the five previous years, his soul was still dissipated within him; and it seemed to him that if God only preserved him from weightier sins, which might tarnish his good name, there was no need to be over-careful about ordinary faults. Nevertheless, he was so kept by God the while, that he had always an unsatisfied feeling within him, whenever he turned himself to the ob-

jects of his desires, and it seemed to him that it must be something quite different which could bring peace to his wild heart, and he was ill at ease amid his restless ways. He felt at all times a gnawing reproach within, and yet he could not help himself, until the kind God set him free from it by turning him. His companions marvelled at the speedy change, wondering how it had come over him; and one said this, and another that, but as to how it was, no one either guessed or came near to guessing it; for it was a secret illumination and drawing sent by God, and it wrought in him with speed a turning away from creatures." [12]

"'Her have I loved, and have sought her out from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse, and I became a lover of her beauty.' These words stand written in the Book of Wisdom, and are spoken by the beautiful and all-loving Wisdom.

"A Servant was filled with disgust and dejection of heart on his first setting forth on the uneven ways. Then did the Eternal Wisdom meet him in a spiritual and ineffable form, and lead him through bitter and sweet until she brought him to the right path of di-

[12] *Life of the Blessed Henry Suso*, p. 6.

vine truth. And, after well reflecting on his wonderful progress, he thus spoke to God: Sweet and tender Lord! from the days of my childhood my mind has sought for something with burning thirst, but what it is I have not as yet fully understood. Lord, I have pursued it ardently many a year, but I never could grasp it, for I know not what it is, and yet it is something that attracts my heart and soul, without which I can never attain true rest.

"Alas, my God, why didst Thou not show Thyself to me long ago, why hast Thou delayed so long? How many a weary way have I not wandered!"

"Eternal Wisdom—Had I done so thou wouldst not have known My goodness so sensibly as now thou knowest it." [13]

"The Servant—Lord! art Thou this thing; or am I it, or what is it?

Eternal Wisdom—Thou art and hast of thyself nothing but imperfection; I am it, and this is the game of love.

The Servant—But Lord, what is the game of love?

Eternal Wisdom—All the time that love is with love, love does not know how dear love

[13] Suso: *Eternal Wisdom*, pp. 25-27.

is; but when love separates from love, then only does love feel how dear love was.

The Servant—Lord! this is a dreary game. Alas, Lord! is inconstancy never cast aside in any one while time lasts?

Eternal Wisdom—In very few persons, for constancy belongs to eternity.

The Servant—Lord, who are these persons?

Eternal Widsom—The very purest of all, and in eternity the most like to God.

The Servant—Lord, which are they?

Eternal Wisdom—They are the persons who have denied themselves in the most perfect manner." [14]

Here we see the longings of Suso's heart, the beginning of his Mystic Way. "He had always an unsatisfied feeling within him." "He felt at all times a gnawing reproach within and yet he could not help himself until the kind God set him free by turning him." It is the usual Christian experience. And then the turning, the conversion, is the awakening. Quite early in his course visions were given him. In Chapter III of his Life he tells of probably the first one of the many. I must

[14] Suso: *Eternal Wisdom*, pp. 62-63.

not describe it, lest I spoil the beauty of his own description:

"His heart was athirst and yet satisfied; his mind was joyous and blooming. Wishes were stilled in him and desires had departed. . . . He said afterwards: If this be not Heaven, I know not what Heaven is . . . adding: Ah, Thou who art my heart's good! Never can this hour pass from my heart. He went on his way in body and no one saw or took note of anything in him outwardly: but his soul and mind were full even of heavenly marvels. The heavenly glances came again and again in his innermost interior, and it seemed to him as if he were floating in the air. The powers of his soul were filled full of the sweet taste of Heaven; just as when a choice electuary has been poured out of a box. The box still keeps the good flavor of it. This heavenly taste remained with him for a long time afterwards and gave him a yearning and longing after God." [15]

But along with these glimpses of God's presence within him comes the sight of himself and his sinfulness and unworthiness. "Was there ever a suitor subjected to as hard terms as

[15] *Life of the Blessed Henry Suso*, p. 10.

these? A thought from God answered: 'By ancient right love and suffering go together. There is no wooer but he is a sufferer; no lover but he is a martyr. Therefore it is not unjust that he who aims so high in love should meet with some things repugnant to him. Remember all the mishaps and vexations which earthly lovers suffer, whether with their will or against it.' He was greatly strengthened to persevere by good inspirations of this sort." [16]

"The Servant—Woe is me, Lord, but this is a dreary pastime! My whole nature rebels against these words. Lord, how shall I ever endure it all? Gentle Lord, one thing I must say: couldst Thou not have found out some other way, in Thy eternal wisdom, to save me and show Thy love for me, some way which would have exempted Thee from Thy great sufferings, and me from their bitter participation? How very wonderful do Thy judgments appear!" [17]

Out of this feeling grew all the terrible austerities of which Suso is almost the crowning example among Mystics. A mere recital of

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[17] *Eternal Wisdom*, p. 31.

his morbidities makes our tender modern flesh creep and shrink from even the thought. We must not judge St. Francis and Suso and the others by our own standards. They used the methods of their day. Probably what their lords and ladies called luxury would be considered hardships by us. At any rate, the attempt to fit a soul to meet and see God was a worthy one. They may have mistaken the means, and yet austerity of some sort cannot be avoided even to-day. The saints of to-day are not the easy livers, the ones who pamper themselves and are ministered unto. And so as we feel ourselves shocked reading of what St. Francis and Suso did to their poor bodies, we should not only pity their mistake but also feel for them a great reverence as for men who, though mistaken, at least dared to the utmost to gain an end we only feebly wish for. Instead of wearing a pectoral cross of gold over a swelling clerical waistcoat, Suso cut with a stylus into his bosom's flesh over his heart, in letters an inch high, the name "Jesu." In Chapters XVII-XX may be found his own account, which closes thus:

"At length, after the Servitor had led, from his eighteenth to his fortieth year, a life of

exercises, according to the outer man—such as have been in part described above—and when his whole frame was now so worn and wasted that nothing remained for him except to die or leave off these exercises, he left them off; and God showed him that all this austerity and all these practices were nothing more than a good beginning, and a breaking through his uncrushed natural man; and he saw that he must press on still further in quite another way, if he wished to reach perfection." [18]

These sensible words also follow, showing the growing sense of wherein self-discipline lies:

"The same thing happens with these persons when, with their undisciplined reason, they try to behold God as all in all, and endeavor, according to their imperfect intelligence, to let go this and that, they know not how. It is true indeed, that everything must be let go by him who would attain perfection; but they do not understand how this letting-go of things is to be managed, and they try to let go this and that without discretion, and to rid them-

[18] *Life of the Blessed Henry Suso*, p. 64.
Read the beautiful *Hymn of Suffering* in *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*, p. 80.

selves of all things without attending to the necessary distinctions. This fault arises either from unlearned simplicity or unmortified craftiness." [19]

Then he enters the "other way," the higher, harder school which is thus described by the Angelic Guide who conducted him thither:

"'The youth answered: 'The highest school and the craft which is taught there consist simply in an entire and perfect detachment from self; that is to say, how a man may attain to such an abiding spirit of self-renunciation, that, no matter how God treats him, either directly by Himself, or indirectly through creatures, or how he feels, whether joyful or sad, the one object of his strivings shall ever be to continue always the same by a perpetual giving up of self, as far as human frailty will allow, and to make God's honor and glory his sole aim, just in the way that the dear Christ acted towards his heavenly Father.' " [20]

There are few more distressing or dramatic stories than the Servitor proceeds to tell, still humbly using the third person, describing the new trials which befell him when he outgrew

[19] *Life of the Blessed Henry Suso,* pp. 206-207.
[20] *Ibid.,* p. 66.

his lonely self-macerations. The cutting of the flesh is mere childish suffering compared to the false accusations of thievery and deception and adultery, the loss of reputation, of the regard of friends, the ruin of his Christian influence as a preacher and a teacher. The beauty and pathos of the story told by him in Chapter XL is without parallel. Surely in the state called Purgation Suso had his perfect schooling, nor was he spared the state called The Dark Night of the Soul. Even with such bright visions as this one to cheer him, he still fell, he tells us, into the deepest gloom. In Chapter VI of his Life, he says:

"It came to pass once, after the time of his sufferings was over, that early one morning he was surrounded in a vision by the heavenly spirits. Whereupon he sought one of the bright princes of heaven to show him the manner of God's secret dwelling in his soul. The Angel answered thus: 'Cast, then, a joyous glance into thyself, and see how God plays his play of love with thy loving soul.' He looked immediately, and saw that his body over his heart was clear as crystal, and that in the centre of his heart was sitting tranquilly, in lovely form, the Eternal Wisdom; beside whom there sat,

full of heavenly longing, the Servitor's soul, which leaning lovingly towards God's side, and encircled by God's arms, and pressed close to His Divine heart, lay thus entranced and drowned in love in the arms of the beloved God." [21]

And then in Chapter XXIII we read of his three interior sufferings common to many Christians: "One of these was impious imaginations against the faith . . . the more he fought against them the more perplexed he became. God suffered him to remain under these temptations about nine years, during which he ceased not, with wailing heart and weeping eyes, to cry to God and all the saints for help. At last, when God deemed that the time was come, he set him entirely free from them and bestowed upon him great steadfastness and clearness of faith." "The second interior suffering was an inordinate sadness. He had such a continuous heaviness of spirit that it was as if a mountain lay upon his heart. A partial cause of this was that his turning away from creatures to God had been carried out with such excessive speed and severity that his bodily frame had suffered greatly from it. This trial

[21] *Life of the Blessed Henry Suso*, pp. 21-22.

lasted for eight years." The third suffering was the thought that he was damned eternally and that naught could avail to put him among the saved:

"After this terrible suffering had lasted about ten years, all which time he never looked upon himself in any other light than as one damned, he went to the holy Master Eckhart, and made known to him his suffering. The holy man delivered him from it, and thus set him free from the hell in which he had so long dwelt." [22]

After this he comes out on the broad high plane of serene communion which is called by some the Unitive State. With him, unlike so many, it did not mean any excess of visions, any ecstasy. It seems to have been rather a lessening of the miraculous occurrences of his earlier years. He was turned from the abuse of his body, from his lonely cell, and from silence, and made to lead a useful normal life in the world. "After he had spent many years in attending to his interior life, God urged him, by manifold revelations, to apply himself also to the salvation of his neighbor." He is Confessor and guide to many. He takes an in-

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

terest in the career of those he sees falling into sin and becomes the savior of many. The later chapters, both of his Little Book and of his Life, become the statement of deep truths about the Nature of God, the right and wrong use of Reason, answering the questions put to him by his spiritual daughter, Elizabeth Stagelin. The theology is, as I have said, of his time, but there is a charm about the statement showing the sweet spirit of the man and a beauty of language which is beyond that of Eckhart and Tauler.

Let us leave the man with these words of his ringing in our ears:

"He who wishes to dwell in his inmost interior must rid himself of all multiplicity. He must habitually reject all that is not the one thing." "If a man cannot comprehend the matter let him be passive and the matter will comprehend him." [23]

"How is it that thou so readily forgettest thyself when thou art so perfectly encompassed with the external Good? What is it thy soul seeks in exterior things who carries within herself so secretly the Kingdom of Heaven?" [24]

[23] *Life of the Blessed Henry Suso*, p. 213.
[24] *Eternal Wisdom*, p. 63.

"Spiritual hunger and actual devotion must impel thee to me more than custom. The soul that wishes to feel me interiorly in the recesses of a secluded life and sweetly to enjoy me, must first of all be cleansed from sin, must be adorned with virtue, encircled with self-denial, decked out with the red roses of ardent love, strewn over with the fair violets of humble submission and with the white lilies of perfect purity." [25]

Coming to my third example of the Mystic Life I find myself free of any biographical notice. To quote her earliest editor, Hugh

[25] *Eternal Wisdom,* p. 132.

"Eternal Wisdom.—The truest, most useful, and most practical doctrine in all the Scriptures that, in a few words, will more than amply convince thee of all the truth requisite for the attainment of the summit of perfection in a godly life, is this doctrine: Keep thyself secluded from all mankind, keep thyself free from the influence of all external things, disenthrall thyself from all that depends on chance or accident, and direct thy mind at all times on high in secret and divine contemplation, wherein with a steady gaze from which thou never swervest, thou hast Me before thy eyes. And as to other exercises, such as poverty, fasting, watching, and every other castigation, bend them all to this as their end, and use just so much and so many of them as may advance thee to it. Behold, thus wilt thou attain to the loftiest pitch of perfection, that not one person in a thousand comprehends, because, with their end in view, they all continue in other exercises, and go astray the long years." [*Eternal Wisdom,* p. 123.]

Cressy (born 1605) in his address to the reader:

"I was desirous to have told thee somewhat of our virgin compiler of these Revelations, but after all the search I could make I could not discover anything touching her more than what she occasionally sprinkles in the book itself."

However, few unknowns convey to us as clear a knowledge of their character as this one. Mother Julian was an anchoress, a recluse, living in a cell attached to the little Norman church of St. Julian in Norwich. In the second chapter of her book, which is called "Revelations of Divine Love," of which four manuscripts have been preserved to us, she tells us: "This Revelation was made to a simple Christian, unlettered, living in deadlie flesh the year of our Lord 1373, the 13th day of Maie." She was then, she says, thirty years of age, "which creature [had] desired before three gifts by the grace of God," out of her longing for more love to God and her trouble over the sight of man's sin and sorrow. Beginning with this intense desire, the mark of the true Mystic, she asked of God these three things: First, the mind of the Passion, second,

some bodily sickness, and third, to have of God's gift three wounds. "These two desires," she tells us, "of the Passion and the sickness that I desired of him, was with a condition; for one thought this was not the common use of prayer. Therefore I said: 'Lord, thou knowest what I would, and if that it be Thy will that I might have it; and if it be not Thy will, good Lord, be not displeased for I will not but as thou wilt.' This sickness I desired in my youth, that I might have it when I were thirty years old. For the third [gift] by the grace of God and teaching of Holie Church, I conceived a mightie desire to receive three wounds in my life. That is to say, the wound of verie contrition, the wound of kind compassion, and the wound of wilful longing to God. Right as I asked the other twaine with a condition, so asked I this third mightilie without any condition. These twaine desires beforesaid passed from my mind, and the third dwelled continually." [26]

At the time appointed the sickness came. She thought she was near her end, but her life was spared and in the time of recovery came the other gift, the "mind," i. e., the keen imag-

[26] *Revelations*, p .6.

ination of the passion of her Lord. This was given her in what she calls "shewings" or revelations. Fifteen of them came quickly and consecutively, lasting from about 4 o'clock till after 9 o'clock of one morning. On the night of the next day came another shewing. Then through all the years to follow (she speaks once of fifteen and again of twenty years save three months) there come to her the ever clearer understanding of what the visions meant which had been vouchsafed.[27]

Of all these things, as Miss Warrack, one of her editors, says (p. xix), "Julian gives a careful account, suggestive of great calmness and power of observation and reflection at the time as well as discriminating judgment and certitude afterwards."

I have no time to introduce you to the woman as revealed in her book. Only a careful and repeated reading of it will give you the right understanding of her character, which, in spite of self-repression and extreme modesty, shines through all she says. She closes an early chapter with these words: "And therefore I pray you all, for God's sake, and counsel you for your own profit, that you

[27] *Revelations*, p. 193.

leave the beholding of a wretch that it was shewed to; and mightily wisely and meekly behold in God that of his courtesie, love and endless goodness would shew it generally in comfort to us all: for it is God's will that ye take it with a great joy and liking, as Jesus Christ hath shewed it to you." [28]

It is to the teaching of her book that I would turn. It will repay the most careful study. Its theme is the loving nature of God. At the end she sums it up in these words:

"And from the time that it was shewed I desired oftentimes to wit in what was our Lord's meaning, and fifteen years after and more I was answered in ghostly understanding, saying thus: 'What? Wouldst thou wit thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Wit it well: love was his meaning. Who sheweth it thee? Love. Wherefore sheweth He it thee? For Love. Hold thee therein, thou shalt wit more in the same. But thou shalt never wit therein other without end.' Thus was I learned that Love was our Lord's meaning," [29] and obliterating herself she leaves this teaching for all. All her "even Christens" are objects of this

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

same love, and all should rest in it and return it. She says (p. 194): "And for this knowing are we most blind. For some of us believe that God is all mighty and may do all: and that He is all wisdom and can do all: but that He is all love and will do all, there we fail."

In marked contrast to Suso and to so many of the medieval Mystics, Julian lays little stress on ascetic practices. Her illness seems to have satisfied her and given her all she felt she needed of bodily infirmity. Immediately after it came all the visions she ever had. She made no attempt to induce any more. She lives the rest of her life in growing appreciation and understanding of what these sixteen Revelations reveal to her. In this she is very different from the type. She differs also in that her life was monastic in the highest degree. She was immured in her narrow cell, which, however, had probably two or three rooms, and she had an attendant who cared for her. Many people must have been attracted to her, and she could converse with them through her barred window and could join in the prayers and sacraments offered in the little church through the "squint," which is still in existence. Her knowledge of human nature, of the

thoughts and temptations and sins of men and women, is large, and her treatment of them is wonderfully keen and modern.

She begins with the great longing: "For I saw him and sought him; for we be now so blind and so unwise that we can never seek God till what time that he of his goodness sheweth him to us. And when we see aught of him graciously then are we stirred with the same grace to seek, with great desire, to see him more blessed fully. And thus I saw him and sought him, and I had him and wanted him, and this is and should be our common working in this life as to my sight." [30]

Her style, as this example shows, is most simple and her use of words constantly apt and illuminating. Her grasp of the thought is only equalled by her power of expressing it. It seems to me that no one has more perfectly caught the strange sensation of having God and yet longing for God; the paradox of the priority found in these phrases: "I saw him and sought him, and I had him and wanted him"; no one has so clearly stated the loving priority of God's seeking, the cause and there-

[30] *Revelations*, p. 27.

fore the satisfaction of ours. For elsewhere she says: "And all this brought our Lord suddenly to my mind and shewed these words and said: 'I am ground of thy beseeking. First it is my will that thou have it; and sithen I make thee to will it, and sithen I make thee to beseek it, and thou seekest it, how should it then be that thou shouldst not have thy seeking?' " [31] And she concludes from this that "for all things that our good Lord maketh us to beseek himself he hath ordained it to us from without beginning." [32]

She has a most unmedieval conception of sin. "And after this our Lord brought to my mind the longing that I had to him before and I saw nothing letted me but sin. And so I beheld generally in us all; and methought if sin had not been we should all have been clean and like to our Lord as he made us. And thus in my folly before this time I often wondered why, by the great foresaid wisdom of God, the beginning of sin was not letted, for then, thought me, that all should have been well. . . . But Jesus answered by this word and said: 'Sin is behovely but all shall be well, and

[31] *Revelations*, p. 98.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.' " [33]

"And in these same words I saw an high marvelous privity hid in God; which privity he shall openly make and shall be known to us in Heaven. In which knowing we shall verily see the cause why he suffered sin to come. In which sight we shall endlessly have joy." [34]

She cannot reconcile the hard doctrines of Holie Church with this sight of sin in the light of God's love. Many chapters are given up to the discussion, but at the end all she can say is that she believes she is right, but the answer is given "full mistely." [35]

We may not study any further, only let me say that there is a freshness and a naïve simplicity in her treatment of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, and the Church, and that her statements are startlingly modern and interesting for their truth to-day as well as for their historical value. I close with this passage, coming out as it does upon the high plane of the Mystic philosophy:

"And then I saw full surely that it is ready

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[35] Cf. p. 127, and note fine passage on p. 143.

to us and more easie to come to the knowing of God than to know our own soul. For our soul is so deeply grounded in God and so endlessly treasured that we may not come to the knowing thereof till we have first knowing of God, which is the Maker to whom it is oned. . . . God is nearer to us than our own soul; for he is ground in whom our soul standeth, and he is mean that keepeth the substance and the sensuality together, so that it shall never depart: for our soul sitteth in God in very rest and our soul standeth in God in sure strength, and our soul is kindly rooted in God in endless love, and therefore, if we will have knowing of our soul and communing and dalliance therewith it behooveth us to seek in it our Lord God in whom it is inclosed." [36]

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V

MODERN MYSTICISM

Mysticism is not a mere matter of historical interest, the study of which satisfies only an antiquarian curiosity. It has not only been the most compelling force in religious life, but it is so to-day. I believe it to be a force with which we must reckon increasingly. We are living in the era of the Spirit, and there is surely a recrudescence of Mysticism going on all about us—a just and justifiable reaction after the century of hard intellectualism and the century of even harder materialism. I quote DuPrel: "Mysticism does not stand beside the other phenomena of Nature, unconnected with them, but forms the last connection between all phenomena. So far from it being an obsolete view, much rather obsolete are those, though modern, conceptions in which it has no place. So far is Mysticism from belonging only to the surmounted past, but much rather will it attain its full significance in the

future. As well the Kantian 'Critique of Reason' as the physiological theory of sense perception and Darwinism point to a view of the world into which Mysticism will be organically fitted." [1]

It would seem worth while, then, to see what Mysticism looks like to-day, where and how it is showing itself, and possibly to enter into the movement ourselves. And this not only for ourselves, but as ministers in a day when "thousands are craving for a basis of belief which shall rest not on tradition, on authority, on historical evidence, but on the ascertainable facts of human experience." [2]

It is wise for us to have gained that experience, or at least to know how others have gained it, and to be able to explain the process. Mysticism having no history, being sporadic and yet universal, any one who has studied it carefully and sympathetically can generally recognize it when it appears. When you see it here or there, early or late, you feel perfectly at home with it. You say, "Here is the same old thing." It suffers a little, perhaps, from sameness. Harnack's statement,

[1] Du Prel: *Philosophy of Mysticism*, p. xxvi.
[2] Inge: *Studies of English Mystics*, p. 238.

"Mysticism is always the same," is found to be true all the way along. That is, in its essence it is the same. In its manifestations, and in the use made of it, and in the explanations offered regarding it, it is very various. Men of very different characters have been Mystics. Dante was a Mystic, but so was Paracelsus. Mother Julian of Norwich, immured in a cell, and St. Catherine of Siena, moulding the politics of Europe and making the Pope do what she told him, are both typical. Wordsworth and Browning were both Mystics, but how different and what different use they make of their Mysticism! So that when we come to study the Mysticism of the present day you have only to look clearly and you will not be surprised to find it, nor be confused by finding it under many different forms. It appears in all departments of thought and life. I begin with Philosophy.

One ought here, of course, to start with Kant, as everybody does, but this might lead to the suspicion that I regarded him as a Mystic. And yet I should like to say that Kant has done great service to the modern advance of philosophical Mysticism when he used the weapons of intellect against itself, and, like

the fabled scorpion, stung the logical mind with its own tail; he opened the way, as he himself taught, for another knowledge of Reality which Mysticism has not been slow to take advantage of. Still farther was the way opened by von Hartmann in his "Philosophy of the Unconscious." He may not have practised what he preached, but he was helping distinctly toward a better grounding of Mysticism in the philosophical thought of the age. The quaint, unmystical, and therefore entirely unsympathetic Professor Bowen of the Harvard of my day said of him:

"Hartmann attempts to prove that the germs both of all philosophy and all revealed religion are to be found in the heated fancies of the Mystics, these fancies again being due to inspirations from the Unconscious." [3]

Fichte, especially in his "Characteristics of the Present Day," and in "The Way Towards the Blessed Life," is full of mystical thought, deeply grounded in philosophy and Johannean in its theology.

He says: "One of the most favorite and customary tricks of tongue-fence among these fanatics is this: to give to the thing which is

[3] Bowen: *Modern Philosophy*, p. 456.

hateful only to them, a name which is hateful to all men, in order thereby to decry it, and render it suspected. The existing store of such tricks and nicknames is inexhaustible, and is constantly enriched by fresh additions; and it would be in vain to attempt here any complete enumeration of them. Only one of the most common of these odious nicknames I will here notice, i. e., the charge that this doctrine which we teach is Mysticism." [4]

"In that which the Holy Man does, lives and loves, God appears, no longer surrounded by shadows nor hidden by a garment, but in his own, immediate, and efficient Life; and the question that is unanswerable from the mere empty and imaginary conception of God—'What is God?'—is here answered: 'He *is* that which he who is devoted to Him and inspired by Him *does*.' Wouldst thou behold God face to face, as He is in Himself? Seek Him not beyond the skies; thou canst find Him wherever thou art. Behold the life of His devoted ones, and thou beholdest Him; resign thyself to Him, and thou wilt find Him within thine own breast." [5]

[4] *The Way Towards the Blessed Life*, p. 32.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

There is in that last passage the distinct echo of Eckhart and Suso. Schleiermacher's influence is also to be reckoned with and is clearly traced through Maurice and Kingsley to our own Professor Allen; and Dr. Allen in his turn has called attention to the fact, likely to be overlooked, that in Jonathan Edwards Mysticism obtained a foothold in this country and in the ultra-Calvinistic thought of his day. In his "Life of Jonathan Edwards," Professor Allen says (p. 24):

"We may trace in his experience the unmistakable marks of the mystic in every age —union with God, absorption as it were into the inmost essence of the divine. He finds expression in the intense language of the Psalmist: 'My soul breaketh for the longing it hath; my soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they who watch for the morning.'

"The seeking and the waiting were at last rewarded. He was reading one day the words of Scripture, 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever, Amen,' when there came to him for the first time a sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things. A sense of the divine glory was, as it were, dif-

fused through him. He thought how happy he should be if he might be wrapt up to God in heaven, and be, as it were, swallowed up in him forever. He began to have an inward, sweet sense of Christ and the work of redemption. The Book of Canticles attracted him as a fit expression for his mood. It seemed to him as if he were in a kind of vision, alone in the mountains or some solitary wilderness, conversing sweetly with Christ and wrapt and swallowed up in God."

If William James will not allow himself to be called a Mystic, he is surely the cause of Mysticism in many others. He says, in his "Varieties of Religious Experience":

"One may say truly, I think, that personal religious experience has its root and centre in mystical states of consciousness; so for us, who in these lectures are treating personal experience as the exclusive subject of our study, such states of consciousness ought to form the vital chapter from which the other chapters get their light. Whether my treatment of mystical states will shed more light or darkness, I do not know, for my own constitution shuts me out from their enjoyment almost entirely, and I can speak of them only at sec-

ond hand. But though forced to look upon the subject so externally, I will be as objective and receptive as I can; and I think I shall at least succeed in convincing you of the reality of the states in question, and of the paramount importance of their function." [6]

He was too clear-sighted and honest to count himself more than an onlooker, but there is much pathos in his evident longing to be something more. These words of his, which are quoted by Professor Pratt, show more than sympathy:

"James's respect for the mystic was an excellent instance of his open mind and empirical point of view; for he was himself no mystic and always disclaimed having what he called the 'leaky' form of consciousness. In answer to a certain question in my questionnaire on this point he replies as follows: 'I believe in God not because I have experienced His presence, but because I need it so that it "must" be true.' 'The whole line of testimony on this point (the existence of such an experience) is so strong that I am not able to pooh-pooh it away. No doubt there is a germ in me of something similar that makes admiring re-

[6] James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 379.

sponse.' This 'something' in him, which at least corresponded to the mystic's consciousness of God, he once described to me in another fashion. 'It is,' he said, 'very vague and impossible to describe or put into words. In this it is somewhat like another experience that I have constantly, a tune that is always singing in the back of my mind but which I can never identify or whistle or get rid of. Something like that is my feeling for God, or a Beyond. Especially at times of moral crisis it comes to me, as the sense of an unknown something backing me up. It is most indefinite, to be sure, and rather faint. And yet I know that if it should cease there would be a great hush, a great void in my life.' " [7]

Moreover, James's colleague Royce, though differing from him in so many ways, yet agrees with him in his high estimate of the value of Mysticism, its influence in the past and its importance for the religion of the future:

"It is the conception of men whose piety has been won after long conflict, whose thoughts have been dissected by a very keen inner scepticism, whose single-minded devotion to an abstraction has resulted from a vast experi-

[7] *The Hibbert Journal*, October, 1911, p. 232.

ence of painful complications of life. . . . It has been the ferment of the faiths, the forerunner of spiritual liberty, the inaccessible refuge of the nobler heretics, the inspirer through poetry, of countless youth who know no metaphysics, the teacher, through the devotional books, of the despairing, the comforter of those who are weary of finitude; it has determined directly or indirectly, more than half of the technical theology of the Church." [8]

These are all statements of outsiders, I confess, but they are valuable as coming from keen observers, and all the more valuable as being unprejudiced. Mysticism's power lies in its practice, yet these men, from scientific study, have come to realize that we must no longer, as in the past, regard it as the vagary of a few unbalanced religionists, but as a psychological form of religion which to-day, even more than in the past, must be recognized and reckoned with as a most important factor in man's religious life.

We come even closer to the heart of Mysticism when we study the philosophies of Eucken and Bergson. Here again, while we may not claim them as Mystics, in our sense of the

[8] Royce: *The World and the Individual*, Vol. I, p. 85.

word, these two men are laying foundations in philosophy and psychology for a deeper and truer Mysticism to come. They are popular teachers largely because they gratify this longing of the modern thinker for the spiritual, the Mystic's turning away from the logical reason, his belief that true knowledge can come only from vital communion with the object sought. This position is taken up especially by Bergson and given standing and popularity to-day. It will not be necessary to give any restatement of the thought of these two men. Their works and teaching are well known, but to one familiar with the Mystic thought, the trend of both is clearly in that direction.

In Eucken I will only call your attention to these three passages, which are characteristic:

"It seems as if man could never escape from himself, and yet when shut into the monotony of his own sphere he is overwhelmed with a sense of emptiness. The only possible remedy here is to radically alter the conception of man himself, to distinguish within him the narrower and the larger life; the life that is straitened and finite can never transcend itself, and the infinite life through which he enjoys communion with the immensity and truth of the

universe. Can a man rise to this spiritual level? On the possibility of his doing so rests all our hope of supplying any meaning or value to life. At least we recognize to-day the hopelessness of trying to supply it from any source external to the individual." [9]

Speaking of Mysticism Eucken says: "But even when this loss is recognized, this mode of thought remains an indispensable element in all development of independent spirituality. It not only persists throughout the Middle Ages but comes into prominence in modern times in new shapes and shows that it is still powerful even at the present day. If we give up the immediate presence of Infinite being in the soul, the life of the soul must inevitably and immediately lose in depth and spontaneity." [10]

Again Eucken speaks of Mysticism, though not calling it by name, when he says:

"But there is a further and more specific manifestation of religion, for it is the function of religion not only to infuse a sense of the Whole into the work of life; but foregoing all appeal to the medium of work, to realize the Whole through direct communion and thereby

[9] *The Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 77.
[10] *The Life of the Spirit*, p. 48.

unsealing the sources of a deeper life. So first arose a distinctive or characteristic religion and with it that complete transcendence of the world which issues in pure inwardness of life; with it also a quickening of the Absolute in human nature, vivifying what else must have remained at the stage of finite existence." [11]

Where Eucken misses the point by avoiding any discussion of this "direct communion"

[11] *The Meaning and Value of Life*, p. 125.

"It is interesting to note that the most recent teaching of Rudolph Eucken is in this respect a pure and practical mysticism, though his conclusions have not been reached by the mystic's road. The 'redemptive remaking of personality' in conformity with the transcendent or spiritual life of the universe, is for him the central necessity of human life. The life of reality, he says, is spiritual and heroic; an act, not a thought. Further, Eucken, like the mystics, declares that there is a definite transcendental principle in man. He calls it the Gemüth, the heart or core of personality; and there, he says, 'God and man initially meet.' He invites us, as we have seen, to distinguish in man two separate grades of being, 'the narrower and the larger life, the life that is straitened and finite, and can never transcend itself, and to an infinite life through which he enjoys communion with immensity and the truth of the universe. At bottom, all the books of the mystics tell us no more and no less; but their practical instructions in the art of self-transcendence, by which man may *appropriate* that infinite life, far excel those of the philosopher in lucidity and exactness.'" [Underhill: *Mysticism*, p. 64.]

Note also Hermann's words in *Eucken and Bergson*, p. 94.

with God, and by omitting, apparently with intention, any study of experimental religion, holding himself quite aloof and leaving us with the empty and unanswered question, "Can man rise to this spiritual level?" Bergson, on the contrary, plunges us at once into the closest intimacy. He tells us that we cannot know the real things by keeping at a distance from them, but that only by sympathy can we become on intimate terms with them, and so by living them know them.

We must remember here, before we go any further, that Bergson's system, while clear, is incomplete. He is consistent in refusing to let it be judged "spatially" and as "static." [12]

What its later developments may lead him to when he follows it into the realm of religion we cannot tell, but as far as he has gone he seems to me to be opening a way for the use and development in religion of that mysterious part of us we glanced at in the third lecture, that penumbra about our logical reason which he calls Intuition. That far we may study him and claim him as more directly a guide into the philosophy of Mysticism than any modern thinker.

[12] *Creative Evolution*, p. xiv.

This is not the place, as I said, to explain his theories, nor do I need to do more than call your attention to what, for our purpose, is the vital point in them. Mysticism has been discredited by philosophers and by the man in the street, by both because it was impatient of reason and claimed to use a power or faculty which worked while reason was in abeyance. Bergson says that it is through intuition that the great advances in philosophy have been made, and the great works of art produced. He contends that theology, the knowledge we can get of God by the intellect, "spatial thinking," is incomplete and unsatisfying, that it does not reach Reality. This is what the Mystics have been laughed at for saying. They have felt and said that they had another faculty, deeper, more far-reaching, a faculty which really extended to God because it was the God-part of them. Bergson is not ready to go as far as this, perhaps, yet, but he claims for intuition the same priority: "Concepts are the deposited sediment of intuition; intuition produces the concepts, not the concepts intuition." [13]

"Intuition, if it could be prolonged beyond a

[13] Le Roy: *The New Philosophy of Henri Bergson*, p. 53.

few instants, would not only make the philosopher agree with his own thought, but also all philosophers agree with each other. Such as it is, fugitive and incomplete, it is in each system what is worth more than the system and survives it." [14] This sentence from Bergson's explanation of his own system in the little "Introduction to a New Philosophy" is distinctly mystical and in harmony with all we have been studying: "It therefore follows that an absolute should be apprehended only by an intuition, while all else is dependent upon analysis. Intuition is that art of intellectual sympathy by which one transports one's self into the interior of an object in order to become harmonious with what is peculiar to it alone and so inexpressible" (p. 10).

It is the cultivation of this "art" of intuition which has been my theme from the very beginning. Dr. Dodson has summed up the teaching in these words:

"The implication is that so far as we do know what anything is, what we are, what life is in us and in the universe, what God is, we know it through insight and not by reasoning. The philosophic view of the world would be

[14] Dodson: *Bergson and the Modern Spirit*, p. 278.

that of the man in whom both of these complementary powers of the mental life were well developed. His intellect would look out and ask questions about the material world, questions which the intellect, using scientific methods, can answer. The same intellect would also look in and ask questions about the heart of life, both of self and of God, and instinct, developed into intuition, would give a true and satisfying reply." [15]

But it is time we turned from the philosophers to see Mysticism manifested in other men and other ways. Poetry reflects the spirit of an age and is prophetic of that which is to come.[16] The poets are seers—inseers, and foreseers. One is tempted, so rich is this field, to go farther back than would be strictly honest in a lecture called "Modern Mysticism." There are fascinating and significant utterances, worthy of more study than they have ever received, in our English poets of the seventeenth century. Crashaw, with his "Flaming Heart" inspired by Santa Teresa; Vaughan the Silurist, with his wonderful poem,

[15] Dodson: *Bergson and the Modern Spirit,* p. 130.
[16] Jones: *Spiritual Reformers,* p. 321.

"I saw Eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm as it was bright";

and Donne and the newly discovered Thomas Traherne. But we must not study them, for too much presses from the last century.

William Blake was living until 1827, so we may count him as the first of our moderns. Strange and wild were his mystic outbursts, but he learned from Swedenborg and Boehme and Law, and although much of his art is too strange to be true, there are flashes which have never been excelled, and we must note that he alone, of all Mystics, has not only tried to express his visions in words, but to put them into pictures of strange form and color. His "Ancient of Days" is as much a poem as his words

"To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour."

Wordsworth is much more than a nature poet. He is a seer, an acute psychologist. Far greater than his passion for Nature is his passion for God, and he reached God by the com-

mon steps of the Mystic. Caroline Spurgeon speaks thus truly of him:

"He found that when his mind was freed from preoccupation with disturbing objects, petty cares, 'little enmities and low desires,' that he could then reach a condition of equilibrium, which he describes as a 'wise passiveness,' or a 'happy stillness of the mind.' He believed this condition could be deliberately induced by a kind of relaxation of the will, and by a stilling of the busy intellect and striving desires. It is a purifying process, an emptying out of all that is worrying, self-assertive, and self-seeking. If we can habitually train ourselves and attune our minds to this condition, we may at any moment come across something which will arouse our emotions, and it is then, when our emotions—thus purified—are excited to the point of passions, that our vision becomes sufficiently clear to enable us to gain actual experience of the 'central peace subsisting forever at the heart of endless agitation.'" [17] What Wordsworth needed to fix his gaze upon was some natural object,—a sounding waterfall, a mountain top, a small celandine. These were to him what the cruci-

[17] Spurgeon: *Mysticism in English Literature*, p. 61.

fix was to St. Francis or the bread on the altar to St. Catherine. His three states are clearly traced: First, Renunciation, the trampling down of passion. It is not conceit, but truth-telling with a purpose, when he says:

"Never did I, in quest of right or wrong,
Tamper with conscience from a private aim.
Nor was in any public hope the dupe
Of selfish passions; nor did ever yield
Wilfully to mean cares or low pursuits."

Then come Concentration and Receptivity. It is pure Mysticism when he says:

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?" [18]

And then in many passages, from which I choose only one, he describes the consciousness of the Infinite, the Unitive state:

[18] *The Poetical Works of Wm. Wordsworth,* Vol. II, p. 180.

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things." [19]

I need not say much of Tennyson, because he had not the mystical temperament, but he is all the more a proof of my thesis. Because he was keenly alive to the intellectual movements of his time, he is truly representative of the Victorian age, and while perhaps he had not the root of the matter in him—certainly he did not at first—he grew steadily into the Mystic thought. In *In Memoriam* we have the struggle between the intellect and the heart, and the final victory lies with the latter:

"A warmth within the soul would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered: I have felt."

[19] *The Poetical Works of Wm. Wordsworth,* Vol. I, pp. 152-153.

And it was to the scientists that he dared to say:

"Speak to him, thou, for he hears
And spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is he than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet,"

until at the last, in the Ancient Sage, he declares:

"And more, my son! for more than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world." [20]

I turn to Browning, whom I consider the most typical and consistent Mystic of all our poets. His work is one consistent whole from beginning to end, and it is all built on the Mystic bases of optimism, the supremacy of love over evil, and the supremacy of intuition over the intellect. There is a remarkable resem-

[20] *The Works of Tennyson*, Vol. VIII, p. 48.

blance between him and Mother Julian of Norwich. I could illustrate every trait of her Mysticism by quotations from Browning's poems, instead of from her Revelations. There is the same sense of unity under diversity, the same attitude towards temptation and sin, the same calm optimism, the same insistence on the fact that "Love was his meaning," the same trust in the power of intuition. I dare not begin to quote, for I am a lover of Browning and you know what they are when they get started. From Paracelsus to Asolando you will find these thoughts appearing in the most unusual places, in "Old Pictures in Florence," and "A Grammarian's Funeral," as well as in "Johannes Agricola," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "A Pillar in Sebzevah" and "A Death in the Desert." But to quote unless fully, and to say more than this unless the discussion be carried through, would be an injustice both to Browning and to Mysticism. To leave him now for the rest, I can give you only samples of how many men of many minds have been touched by this feeling and have given it various expression. That strange character, Emily Brontë, from her Yorkshire wilderness, voices it thus in her "Last Lines":

"O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity,
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying life—have power in Thee.

. . . . . .

"Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee."

Keble's "Two Worlds are Ours" is familiar to all, and Faber is never so sweet and simple as when giving expression to his Mysticism, which is more Protestant than Catholic:

"But God is never so far off
As even to be near;
He is within: our spirit is
The home He holds most dear.

"To think of Him as by our side
Is almost as untrue,
As to remove His throne beyond
Those skies of starry blue.

"So all the while I thought myself
Homeless, forlorn, and weary,
Missing my joy, I walked the earth
Myself God's sanctuary." [21]

[21] *Faber's Hymns*, p. 196.

Matthew Arnold rather unexpectedly shows this side of his character to us occasionally, as in these lines from "The Buried Life":

"Only—but this is rare—
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafen'd ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd—
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

. . . . . .

And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes." [22]

Of course Whittier was a Mystic, and I need only refer to his wonderful poem, "The Meeting"; but you might overlook his neighbor in Salem, who is less well known than he ought to be, and who wrote some of the most beauti-

[22] *Poems*, by Matthew Arnold, Vol. II, pp. 124-125.

ful sonnets in our language, one of which, called "The Presence," is distinctly mystical. I mean Jones Very.

Our own Lowell touches his deepest note when he speaks of the themes which occupy Eckhart, Tauler and Suso. You may remember (and I think he has nothing more beautiful) these lines from "The Cathedral":

"No man can think nor in himself perceive,
Sometimes at waking, in the street sometimes,
Or on the hillside, always unforewarned,
A grace of being, finer than himself,
That beckons and is gone,—a larger life
Upon his own impinging, with swift glimpse
Of spacious circles luminous with mind,
To which the ethereal substance of his own
Seems but gross cloud to make that visible,
Touched to a sudden glory round the edge.
Who that hath known these visitations fleet
Would strive to make them trite and ritual?
I, that still pray at morning and at eve,
Loving those roots that feed us from the past,
And prizing more than Plato things I learned
At that best academe, a mother's knee,
Thrice in my life perhaps have truly prayed,
Thrice stirred below my conscious self, have felt
That perfect disenthrallment, which is God." [23]

[23] *Lowell's Poetical Works,* Vol. IV, p. 52—*The Cathedral.*

But time would fail me to tell of all the poets, great and small, where you will find, in our modern language, the thoughts of the old Mystics. There is the whole Celtic school in England and Ireland—William Sharpe, who is Fiona MacLeod, Yeats, George Russell ("A. E."), Coventry Patmore, William Canton, and Evelyn Underhill. But I cannot leave the poets without one more quotation, this time from the author of "The Hound of Heaven"; if you know it already, so much the better:

"O world invisible, we view Thee,
O world intangible, we touch Thee,
O world unknowable, we know Thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch Thee!

"Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air—
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumor of Thee there?

"Not where the wheeling systems darken
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

"The angels keep their ancient places:
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendored thing.

"But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

"Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames." [24]

Turning from individuals to certain movements of modern times we may trace, I think, the influence of the principles upon which Mysticism is based, even if some of the results are unmystical, strange and even shocking. If Mysticism is the use of the whole man, including the sub-conscious self, then in how many ways, some true and helpful, many silly and fantastic, is Mysticism rife to-day!

In the field of education and moral reform we have within a generation the wonderful development of the psychology of the child mind and the return to and dependence upon the power of suggestion.[25] The talking to the baby as it goes to sleep, the insistence on the value of all the surroundings of a child's life,

[24] *The Kingdom of God is Within You,* Francis Thompson, Poems, Vol. II, p. 226.

[25] Hart: *Preventive Treatment,* p. 374.

the sounds and sights, the tempers and ideals, the discovery in after years of some long forgotten fear or degradation, as the poor man comes to be treated,—all are showing us how large our little life is. More and more you will find stress being laid on what Münsterberg distinguishes from psychical therapy, calling it psychical hygiene. If you will read the works of Waldstein and Quackenbos and Mason you will see how this psychical education, both mental and moral, is being carried on. In the realm of the purely physical, the power of suggestion, or what is called mind over matter, a power which has always been used, is now coming to be studied and used as never before. The literature is enormous.

One of the earliest, and still the classical book on the subject, is Feuchtersleben's "The Dietetics of the Soul." This goes back to about 1840. At the same time was living in this country Phineas P. Quimby, about whom Horatio Dresser has written a book called "Health and the Inner Life." Quimby is the source of all Mrs. Eddy's teachings. Neither of them, however, knew that whatever of truth was in their system was founded on the principle of Mysticism, the use of the sub-con-

scious self. But whereas Mysticism uses it as a means of reaching God, or rather as an avenue of approach for God to reach us, the Christian Scientist uses it for the purely selfish purpose of relieving a headache or curing constipation or gently ousting a cancer by saying it isn't there. It is not Mysticism, therefore, but that debased form of it which we call Magic. It is a matter of credulity and incantation, and is a fine example of what the sub-conscious self can be led into when entirely unregulated by the reason. It is not known whether that strange woman who said she discovered Christian Science ever studied to reduce her foundation principles to the form of a syllogism. "It is presumed not, for otherwise their intense, monumental and aggressive absurdity would have become as apparent to her as it is to others. Let us see how they look in a syllogism:

" 'Matter has no existence. Our bodies are composed of Matter. Therefore our bodies have no existence and disease cannot exist in a non-existent body.' " [26]

But this is waste of time. My point is that Christian Science is a reversion to a type of

[26] Hudson: *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*, p. 157.

Mysticism. There are many other symptoms of more sensible uses of the power which Mysticism holds over the body, all the way from those queer creatures who are publishing books called "Volo," and "The Will to be Well," and "Just How to Wake the Solar Plexus." Others give us directions how, by concentration, we may acquire large wealth or draw to us just the wife we want or need. Magic, all of it. But more serious are the movements called New Thought, Mental Healing, all the way up to the Emmanuel Movement. Volumes might be written, as many have been written, all with accounts demonstrating the power of the subjective self, through suggestion, over the body, its power of modifying function and tissue, increasing or decreasing the circulation of the blood, and actually healing many diseases. It is a sign of the modern Mysticism. And then as to the sphere of religion in modern Christianity, the evidences are all about us. Every one of these movements I have spoken of has a tendency to become distinctly religious, if not Christian. Beginning in revolt against the church, they are steadily returning to Christ. Christian Science has changed from a dose to a dogma, from a cure to a church. All over

this country and in England little groups of people are gathering together to seek God for themselves through the Mystic Way, and are finding him, not only in sporadic outbreaks of Buddhism and Bahaism, in bits of Oriental pantheism like Mr. Bjerregaard's, but in higher, truer ways men as well as women are meeting in ever larger groups to utilize the powers of this subliminal self. These groups bear many names and some are nameless, but the purpose is the same that drove the anchorite to his cell and the Quaker to his meeting, while the methods are identical with those of the older Mystics whose way we have traced. The books of devotion written of late are almost all distinctly mystical. Such books of enormous popularity are Annie Payson Call's "Power Through Repose," and Ralph Waldo Trine's "In Tune with the Infinite." What could be more mystical than this from the heart of the latter's book: "The great central fact in human life, in your life and in mine, is the coming into a conscious vital realization of our oneness with this Infinite Life, and the opening of ourselves fully to this divine inflow." And remember, please, that this is not any closet doctrine, but that the book has sold into the

hundred thousands, and is read by perhaps a million people to-day. They like it because it touches, in a plain and homely and modern way, the mystic sense which we all have and which has been hungry for so long. The number of books on Intercessory Prayer and Meditation, the number of reprints of the works of the older Mystics, are all signs of the new interest in Mysticism of which I am speaking. I suppose none of us realize how hungry people are to-day for this kind of teaching. I am sure we do not realize how very largely it is being satisfied. It seems to me it is the duty of the Church to speak to these people, in the name of God, to "suggest" God to the subliminal self, and so develop a new and a better, because a more clearly understood and more scientifically controlled, Christian Mysticism. How the Church is attempting to do this I hope to show in my next and last lecture. The Church is trying in various ways, both to voice and to satisfy this growing need. I have shown, I hope, how universal and how growing it is. It must interest us to see how we are meeting it, and besides, the Church has much to learn from this movement if it would approach it sympathetically. It would gain as much as it

gave. It would gain a deeper sense of the reality of spiritual things, of a communion with God through real prayer, and of the power of intercessory prayer which these aberrant Mystics are using magnificently.

We who believe in a Spirit whose comings and goings we cannot tell, ought to hold ourselves open to his breathings, come they whence they may.

SUGGESTED READING

von Hartman: *The Unconscious.*
Fichte: *The Way Towards the Blessed Life.*
Eucken and Bergson passim
William Blake: *Poems.*
William Wordsworth: *Poems.*
Robert Browning: *Poems.*
Trine: *In Tune with the Infinite.*
Dresser: *The Power of Silence.*
Brackett: *The Technique of Rest.*
Call: *Power Through Repose.*
Wood: *Ideal Suggestion.*

VI

PRACTICAL MYSTICISM

I HAVE failed utterly if I have not made it clear that Mysticism is not a curious by-path which the student of history need not tread, but a constantly recurring and revivifying force in the history of our religion. I have failed if I have not made you see that the great Mystics were not psychic freaks but only extreme examples of that life hid with Christ in God which is open, in greater or less degree, to every child of God.

If I have not failed, then you must agree with what I said in closing my last lecture, that the Christian Church has much to learn from Mysticism, and should study it carefully with a view to its practice, to hold itself open to its influences, come they whence they may.

The theory of Mysticism is before us. If I have not made *that* clear, that does not mean that nobody can. But what I most want to

show is that when you do really understand Mysticism, you will find it very hard not to practise it. And so I call this last lecture *Practical Mysticism,* and ask you to see with me how some men are practising it and offering opportunities for others to practise it, and then to close with some more intimate suggestions.

I want to speak first of certain exhibitions of the Mystic spirit in the worship and work of the Church to-day. I pass by the Emmanuel Movement and the many Healing Missions, because I have already mentioned them and because, however much I am in sympathy with them, their purpose is narrower than my theme, and they deal almost exclusively with the abnormal. The wreckage which crowds their clinics is thrown up from the troubled sea of our modern life and needs special and expert treatment. It is only a symptom of a condition in which we all find ourselves. The world is restless and the revival of interest in Mysticism shows that it is trying to reach some center which is calm. Eucken voices this need very clearly when he says:

"'It is not only at particular points that civilization does not correspond to the demands

of spiritual life, but that civilization, as a whole, is in many ways in conflict with those demands. We feel, with increasing distress, the wide interval between the varied and important work to be done at the circumference of life and the complete emptiness at the centre. When we take an inside view of life we find that a life of mere bustling routine preponderates, that men struggle and boast and strive to outdo one another, that unlimited ambition and vanity are characteristic of individuals, that they are always running to and fro, and pressing forward, or feverishly exercising all their powers. But throughout it all we come upon nothing that gives any real value to life, and nothing spiritually elevating. Hence we do not find any meaning and value in life, but in the end a simple huge show in which culture is reduced to a burlesque. Any one who thinks it all over and reflects upon the difference between the enormous labor which has been expended and the accompanying gain to the essentials of life must either be driven to complete negation and despair, or must seek new ways of guaranteeing a value to life and liberating men from the sway of the petty hu-

man. But this will force men to resume the quest for inner connections.' " [1]

And then again he says in another place:

"If this is really the case, it can be easily understood how men grow tired and weary of all the rush and bustle, which is so confused and yet in the end so empty, how this feeling of weariness spreads and produces a longing for more persistence, more peace and repose in life. It is a remarkable feature of the present day that the old mysticism is regaining its power of attraction, and that the Indian religions, which release men from the cares and troubles of time, are gaining many adherents also in the West. Is not this to be connected with the change in vital feeling which we have described?" [2]

This reaching out for more peace and repose in life is evident in many directions. If the rush and hurry in these days, which sweeps us along breathlessly either with or against our will, takes its toll in physical or nervous or mental exhaustion, then we turn to the blessings offered by the noble men and women who teach us how to be calm, to re-create, to change

[1] Quoted in Hermann: *Eucken and Bergson,* pp. 33-34.
[2] Eucken: *The Life of the Spirit,* pp. 158-159.

the current of our thoughts, and so the clinics of the workers in the Emmanuel Movement, the New Thought and countless variations of these are crowded. To those who can stultify their intellect even Christian Science brings its blessing of calm and cheerfulness. But widespread as is this nervous exhaustion, this mental strain, and widespread as are its effects in the life of the individual, it is as I said, only a symptom, and a side issue. Most men are healthy in body and mind, and the over-emphasis on the abnormalities have made many feel that the cure must be as peculiar as the disease. But the cure is based on the root principle of Mysticism and uses its very methods. It is an unconscious plagiarism, very interesting to trace. And we are studying the larger issues and uses, those which belong to all men and which we feel are needed by all men. For there is in us all the need of God, and these days of haste and unrest have had the same effect on the spiritual life as they have had upon the nervous system. They have given us no time to think of God, to commune with him in prayer, to be quiet and know. The life of the Spirit has been dwindling, and men and women are beginning to feel a loss: a loss

not to be supplied by any amount of strenuous social service, nor even by the ordinary method of Church-going.

And so there has arisen alongside of the efforts to provide help for the nervously weakened and the mentally unbalanced, a movement, as widespread as the need, to provide help for the spiritually stunted, the religiously restless, the seekers for reality in their relation to God, the people who want not only to know about, but to feel God. As we have seen from the beginning of these studies, this longing is the basis of Mysticism. Here today, in a time apparently so unfavorable, we find an intense and growing feeling for God, which is yet the outgrowth of and the re-action from this very period of devotion to material things. In response to this, many have begun, in various ways, to guide this longing aright and to satisfy it. Here again the methods used, while various, are just those of the old Mystics. Once more, and for the last time, I call your attention to them.

One of the leaders in this movement is the Rev. Cyril Hepher of Newcastle-on-Tyne. A few years ago I met him at the house of the Dean of the Cathedral in Boston, and heard

him tell of his experience in conducting Missions of Help in New Zealand and in Canada. The next Sunday he preached a remarkable sermon in the Cathedral from the text, "There was silence and I heard a voice." Since then Mr. Hepher had published his experiences and his sermon in a volume called "The Fellowship of Silence," from which I am permitted to quote:

"Man is not brought to his highest attainment when he has won mental concentration, when he has forgotten the existence of his body in the interest of his brain; he has only half his lesson when he stands there; there is a hard space still to cover—where the intellect itself comes to quiescence, comes to silence, and another capacity in man's nature, a capacity for a yet higher form of consciousness than the intellectual, begins to appear. When a man has fastened his whole being upon his spiritual development, when he would set free the very highest power latent within the soul of man, he must learn to bring the busy, thinking brain to a halt; he must learn how to still the intellect for the sake of the spirit, even as on a lower plane he had to learn how to still his

physical organism for the sake of the intellectual."

"There are two great forms in which this consciousness can be practised. The first is in secret meditation. Now, there are thousands of people in the new world who are crying out for meditation, who are absolutely weary of a religion which cannot give them the power of an immediate contact with the Unseen, and who are turning away their interest to strange practices,—to New Thought, to Christian Science, to Theosophy, and what not,—as though that holy practice of meditation was a thing unknown within the Church of God. She is the Mother of meditation; but there are very few of her children who will take the time to practise it; there are few but would say that the claim of one half-hour a day of silent meditation in the Presence of God is an absurd claim—even for the busiest man."

"But there is yet another way, and you are practising it here:—and right glad am I to stand in this pulpit this morning and speak to you who are finding this other way—of meditation in fellowship. I wish I could take you with me to a little Church in New Zealand, where about two years ago I first experienced

the meditation in fellowship:—a little white Church, lying in a circle of pines and cypresses:—the September afternoon was drawing on and the dusk was settling over the land, as we passed into the silent Church, a little group;—no priest at the altar, no minister in the pulpit, no student from any school,—all was emptiness save for the Great Presence, which soon we perceived. No one spoke, there were no words of preparation: we entered, we knelt, we were still—and our souls began to be united with a new and strange sense of human fellowship in that silence; and out of that consciousness there grew a deeper sense—the sense of a Divine Presence; and the work of prayer, ever hard, became easy. Someone was there, a mighty One—unseen, yet there. The half-hour sped away, and in all one little word and one tiny prayer were the only sounds that broke the stillness; and when at last we rose and passed out into the evening light we had been nearer to God than ever I, for one, had been before in all my life. We had found the strange and mystic power of the fellowship of silence. And that you are practising here, and it is a sacred privilege. Once known, you will never lose a day without it. It will en-

large itself, and it will draw to its circle many souls; and there will be found here, as now in many other places in the world, groups of men who are learning to hear God's voice in that exquisite and holy silence.

"Men and women of Boston, I do not know anything concerning conditions of Church life in America, but I know something of them in England and in New Zealand and in Canada, and I know this: that wherever I have been I have found that men are growing dissatisfied with our Church service. They are asking for some greater measure of spiritual depth,—that when we assemble for holy worship we may with more vividness enter into the Presence and touch God. It may be that my words fall on some ears that are responsive. There are plenty of people who are turning away from the Church:—why? They tell us that they fail to find a sufficient depth of spiritual reality in our public worship. We believe that the restoration of holy silence into our worship will be gain for the whole people. Of this I am certain:—there is not a man amongst us who will not gain if he can follow, even in part, the words of the Psalmist,—*to be silent unto God.*"

He speaks again of his New Zealand expe-

riences in an article in *The Commonwealth.* In a little church were held meetings with a group of Friends (Quakers) and Theosophists. He thus describes what happened:

"We knelt without a word; presently some rose from their knees and sat down. We were but a handful. There was no sound of vocal prayer. No leader at faldstool, or altar, but 'Meeting' had begun. I cannot put into words what happened, but some aspects of the experience I must try to express. First there came very quietly the sense of a Presence. The work of prayer grew strangely easy. We were not resolutely fixing our thoughts upon a friend in a far country; we were listening to One Who was there in the church—speaking. The still air seemed to vibrate with this Presence that could be felt. God was speaking to us, not in words, or voices, but in that speech which does not need to be uttered, yet if I may say so bold a thing, it was not what He was saying that mattered so much, as that He was there and we with Him. That was enough.

"Then, again, one perception that grew as the minutes slipped by unnoticed was the sense of fellowship. We in that church were no longer isolated individuals. It was unques-

tionably a corporate act in which we were engaged, or rather a corporate experience that had come to us.

"Afterwards I came to understand that this manner of prayer depends on fellowship of mind and creates what it depends on. The Quakers end their meeting by shaking hands in silence. The symbol of fellowship cannot be repressed. If their experiences are like ours at this meeting I can perfectly understand the significance they set on their simple sacrament of friendship. They enter their meeting too in the spirit of unanimity. One idea is dominant in every mind: that of waiting upon God, waiting for the moving of the Spirit. . . .

"As I try in my mind to weigh the experience, which I have told very inadequately, but at least without conscious exaggeration, or over-statement, what shall I say of it? It was to me a profoundly new experience, different in kind from other times of realization of the Presence, in that it was, as I think, the psychic approach to the spiritual world. Those who make excursions into the psychic in other interests than the direct approach to God, spiritualists, for example, use methods very like Quaker methods. They use the association in

motionless silence, and they assert that where there is lacking unanimity of mind they have no success; a single person who resists the common desire of the rest is sufficient to prevent any advance. The *séance* is a Quaker meeting put to illegitimate uses; but they are alike in their use of the psychic atmosphere which is created in silence and fellowship. To many the word psychic is a sufficient condemnation. My reply is, that the God Who made the spiritual made also the psychic, and that there can be no function or capacity of our nature which is not for holy uses. As a matter of fact the secret of the preacher's influence is often enough the psychic power with which he is endowed, which unconsciously he is putting forth.

"I believe our Quiet Meeting to have been the consecrated use of latent psychic forces which led directly and deeply to the spiritual, to God Himself.

. . . . . .

"A third reflection suggests to me, that more use of silence in our own public worship would lift it to a higher spiritual level. In one church in the North, the silence after the Consecration of the Blessed Sacrament at the Solemn

Eucharist, though but a bare two minutes, is teaching a congregation a new understanding of adoration. Since it began to be observed, a marked growth in the acceptance of the Eucharist itself has been observed there. But this is so widely advised now that the only marvel is, that there is still left a church in the land where the superstition now holds, that the one thing at all cost to be destroyed in choral services is silence."

Much of the same sort of spirit is shown in the meetings held by Dean Rousmaniere in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, in Boston. The Class in Personal Religion emphasizes the element of silence, and there is much intercessory prayer. He calls the silence "directed," for after each prayer there is observed such a moment or two in which the worshippers are asked to hold steadily in their minds the thought in the prayer which has happened to be the most real expression of their needs or of their experience. Those who enter into the spirit of these meetings know their power to calm and comfort. The work among the Friends at the Cathedral is another attempt to bring the Spirit, which among them needs a little more formality of expression, into our

sacramental system, which sometimes loses the spirit in the form. The Quaker has a great contribution to make to us, and we should welcome it, especially as on his side he is evidently coming to see that we have something to offer him; but we have room to receive him while he can hardly accommodate us.

There is another work of the same sort, but even more intense. The spirit of it permeates the whole parish, and even extends far beyond its borders. It is being done in the Church of the Comforter in Greenwich Village in New York. The whole atmosphere is saturated with the Mystic spirit; the presence of God seems to brood there, and the smallest detail of the parish work is filled with the sense of it. They have a rescue mission for men, and all the paraphernalia of an institutional church, but all they do is done with the spirit, which makes some of our social work seem perfunctory and irreligious, as some of it is. A layman, Mr. Ernest C. Hargrove, began the Mission some years ago and still conducts, once a week, a simple service of short prayers and long silences, giving later an interpretative address. One of his courses was upon "Discipleship as a Present Day Possibility," in

which he spoke of the inner life as a "life lived in the presence of God and in union with God"; of the acts of the Inner Life and of the means of attaining the Inner Consciousness, such as (following closely, you see, the Mystic Way) clearing the ground and purification of conscience and heart; Construction and the Practice of Recollection and Detachment; and lastly, Intimacy, which sounds like the Mystic's Union.

My own experience has served to show me how even the average parishioner will respond to any effort to supply this need of quiet and silence in worship.

A recent writer has said: "Some priests are finding out and teaching their people to value and apprehend the power of active, energizing co-operative silence before God. I hope that slowly, at least, the principle will be generally recognized. But the principle of 'bright and hearty services,' with much glare of light and crash of organ, and brief manly heart to heart talks, is stubbornly rooted in the minds of many priests as the ideal of worship and corporate devotion. And I fear it will be long before we get altogether rid of the notion that from beginning to end of a serv-

ice, clergy and congregation must be continuously employed in saying or singing something as loudly as possible." [3] So deeply rooted is this idea in the minds of priests and people alike that very few care or dare to try the experiment of introducing periods for silent prayer and humble listening into public worship. Should it be tried suddenly we know that the congregation would be troubled and think that the minister had either fainted or was inattentive to his duty and wandering in his mind.

But the congregation to whom the matter is explained, will respond at once and see the need and reasonableness of the change. This is because they have felt the need in their own hearts and had never realized that the public service in Church could supply it. The quiet office of Holy Communion, at some early hour, can be made more helpful by the introduction after the Prayer for the Church Militant and after the Consecration of the ancient Secretæ, giving the people time for silence, that they may realize the Divine Presence by calming their inner selves and fitting them to draw

[3] Lawrence Enderwych.

nearer to that Unitive State which the Sacrament symbolizes.

And in ordinary services, in many ways, this worship of the silence can be made use of. Hymns may be heartily sung and beautiful anthems listened to, but these should lead up to a few words of direction and explanation by the leader, and then prayers should be made, chiefly personal and intercessory, or for larger, national and human needs, and then after each petition, silence should be kept for a space, that all may concentrate their thoughts and desires on the subject prayed for. The attitude of the people is changed from languid inattention to a familiar form of words, to an intense personal co-operation in desiring one thing of the Lord. This sense of a personal partaking in the prayer, brings the sense of God's presence and the knowledge that we are working together with Him for the good of others, and sends us out of His house with a look of joy and strength on our faces, seldom seen after the more formal services of the day.

To feel ill at ease in a service of silence is to argue a lack of acquaintance with God. I am only afraid of pauses in a conversation when I am talking to a stranger and feel awkward

in his presence. With an intimate friend I can afford to be silent.

In these and in other ways of which I could tell you, were there time, I think you will see how the spirit of Mysticism is expressing itself in the religious life of the Church. It is all very free and simple. It seems to be growing. Certainly none who have tried these things will give them up. I know there are some who would like to begin.

It is here that I must become personal and practical. I need not enlarge upon Eucken's words with which I began. We all know and deplore the restlessness of the age. Some of us feel that better things are impending. I feel very strongly that a great many people are waiting to be shown the way into Mysticism as the remedy for what we deplore. And just now, I have spoken of the ways some are trying to meet men's needs. But there are other and even better ways than these. The need of God is a personal thing, and while crowds and co-operation and common worship are helps, the need is in the soul and must be filled there in utter loneliness.

Mysticism brings the soul face to face with God, which is what the soul wants. There are

no intermediaries, nor companionships. So my last word must be to the individual, whoever he may be. I have tried in these lectures to make it plain that the way is open even to the average normal man. I have presented a sequence of the various steps a sample of the general path to be taken by the man who wants God, but all I have said has been at second hand, with much reference to others, and many quotations. I would not leave you with only this. I should be disappointed if I had only interested you in the theory. My motive you know from the beginning has been practical,—that of the missionary, perhaps even of the proselyter.

We must remember that these mystical facts and states which we have studied are only authoritative for those who have them. They are not like mathematical axioms which can be handed from one mind to another and command acceptance because the common human reason cannot deny them. They must remain entirely uninfluential and powerless until we experience them ourselves. We have no right to accept the testimony of these mystical states from any Mystic except as being true for him. That does not make them true for us.

What we must do, therefore, if we can, is to set ourselves in the way, to try to use the same processes by which others have succeeded in attaining their desire, to try to be the kind of men they were, and then to see if the same reward will come to us. If it does we know.[4] There are some who will never know, some who will never care to know, for I do not mean to say that all men should be Mystics, or that if all men were, that the Church would not lose something. As the world of thoughtful men can be divided into only two classes, the Aristotelians and the Platonists, the intellectualists and the intuitionists, so the fullness of the Church's life requires the same combination of differing qualities, each respecting the other, each learning from the other, each supplementing the other's defect. Only the great intellectual and religious geniuses can in themselves combine the two—men like Augustine and Eckhart and Phillips Brooks.

You will already have discovered my limitations and know on which side I must be classed, but if my appeal be one-sided I myself have told you. I cannot think it is prejudice which makes me feel that this side is the more im-

[4] James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 422.

portant to be emphasized in these days. Men and women want to know God in their hearts; they want to feel Him there as an ever-present help in time of trouble, not to be able to prove Him there in time of controversy. As I understand the time, men are not controversial, not sceptical, but they are hungry for God. It behooves us to be leaders of men in this their search for God, and to be true leaders we must go on ahead and be able to show that we know the way. We must be living guides, not mere stationary finger posts. To be such as this we must fit ourselves. The way is not easy, but if we will take it and persevere I believe the end is sure. At any rate, I am certain the duty rests upon us.

I have often wished to quote these words of Professor Royce, written a good many years ago. They apply to religion and its teachers as well as to philosophy and its teachers. He is speaking of one of the greatest of Mystics:

"Eckhart must preach with the understanding—ay, but with the spirit also. He had been early trained to a sense of the importance of learning, but once more these so precious fruits of contemplation must be communicated to others; yes, must be built up anew in every

hearer's mind as the actual outcome, as the very form and body of his own personal and religious life. For all this meant the one great object—the salvation of souls, the guidance of the perplexed, the portrayal of truth. Such popular translation of philosophy, in case a man's philosophy means to him in any sense the mirror of human life, must always tend, in the man who thus translates, to a continual renewal and refreshment of his own most fundamental thinking itself. The technical weaver of philosophical theories may or may not bear in mind the fact that had it not been for the vital perplexities of experience—the immediate issues of life—the problems of the schools would never have come into existence. Accordingly, such a technical student may long neglect the renewed examination of his own fundamental principles for the sake of devoting himself to the development of their most remote theoretical consequences. But the man who wants to make his philosophy immediately interesting to the serious-minded amongst the people must not dwell upon those remoter consequences so much as upon the principles; for it is just the most fundamental principle of life that the unlearned inquirer

desires to get. People naturally begin in philosophy with the most critical and tremendous of its issues. But if you are to translate such fundamental principles into the speech of your hearer's spiritual experience, if you are to show him that the most abstruse truth walks daily beside him, well, then, daily you too must experience and must re-state to yourself this abstrusely spiritual truth that lies at the basis of your life as of your hearer's. You must continually re-initiate yourself into the mysteries of your own philosophical doctrine. It must become and remain a personal as well as a technical matter with you." [5] And then very lately he has added these impressive words:

"Is such a direct touch with the divine possible? The mystics of all ages have maintained that it is possible. Are they right? To answer this question adequately would be to solve the religious paradox. It would be to show whether and how the individual, even in his isolation, 'alone with the divine,' can come to be nevertheless in unity with all other spirits, in touch with all that lies beneath and above himself, and with all that constitutes the essence of reality. Perhaps this is indeed pos-

[5] Royce: *Studies of Good and Evil*, p. 266.

sible. Unless it is possible, revelation, as we have seen, loses precisely its most intimate significance, as an appeal of the divine spirit directly to the interior light. But, on the other hand, all the mystics confess that, if this is possible, and if it happens in their own cases, they alone, viewing their experience merely as an individual experience, know not how it happens, but must accept their revelation as an insight without knowing in what precise sense it is insight.

"It follows that individual experience remains a source of religious insight as indispensable and as fundamental as it is, by itself, inadequate and in need of supplement. Unless you have inwardly felt the need of salvation and have learned to hunger and thirst after spiritual unity and self-possession, all the rest of religious insight is to you a sealed book. And unless, in moments of peace, of illumination, of hope, of devotion, of inward vision, you have seemed to feel the presence of your Deliverer, unless it has sometimes seemed to you as if the way to the homeland of the spirit were opened to your sight by a revelation as from the divine, unless this privilege has been yours, the way to a higher growth in insight

will be slow and uncertain to you. But on the other hand, no one who remains content with his merely individual experience of the presence of the divine and of his deliverer, has won the whole of any true insight. For, as a fact, we are all members one of another; and I can have no insight into the way of my salvation unless I thereby learn of the way of salvation for all my brethren. And there is no unity of the spirit unless all men are privileged to enter it whenever they see it and know it and love it." [6]

This is preaching, I confess, but it is Royce's sermon and not mine. How shall we practise it? There are no schools for teaching Mysticism, as there are schools for teaching Mathematics and Theology. It is a personal and very private matter. One hesitates to speak of it in public, and fears the immodesty of pretending to know enough of it to teach it. But the missionary must bear his testimony and be prepared to see many of his converts, if he is fortunate enough to have any, go far beyond him in the development of his truth.

I said in my first lecture, in trying to make clear what we were going to think about to-

[6] Royce: *Sources of Religious Insight*, pp. 31-34.

gether, that "a Christian Mystic is that kind of a Christian who longs for and who believes he can have an experience of intimate communion with God, through Christ, in this life. This is his supreme purpose." Now Mysticism is founded on this longing. Of course all men have this desire in some degree. I know that, and have said it. But I have also said, and contend, that with the Mystic this longing is much more intense than it is with the Aristotelian. Therefore the first thing for us to do is "to seek the ground of our hearts," to look into ourselves and ask, with entire honesty and the keenest searching, whether, as a matter of fact, we do so desire this intimate heart communion with God. What are we aiming at? On what thoughts do our minds naturally rest? What is the supreme purpose toward which our efforts as well as our aspirations definitely turn? There will be nothing but disappointment until these questions are answered. No one can be a Mystic who has not this "single intent," this "blind stretching of the soul," toward God. As Walter Hilton says: "Ransack thy conscience and look what thy will is, for therein consisteth the whole business." [7]

[7] *The Scale of Perfection*, p. 151.

If you will undertake this search, let me beg you to make it thorough. You may not reach your deepest desire at first. Other wishes may appear superior and you may be too easily discouraged and too entirely acquiescent. We do not all know what we really want. Like physical hunger, the want is so diffused that we may feel the emptiness in some place where it is not. But if you will persist in your search I think you will find, most of you, that the real answer to your many questions, the real satisfaction of your many fickle wishes, is God. God is not means, but end. Too often Eckhart's words are true of us: "Know that when you seek your own you never find God there till you seek God alone. You seek something with God and do with him just as though you made him a candle with which to look for something: and having found it you throw the candle away." [8]

If you find this desire to be not a vague wish, but a compelling impulse, then I call your attention to the second part of my definition. To carry out this "will to know God," I said that the Mystic believed that by a course of training he could so develop his inmost self—

[8] Quoted in *Horæ Mysticæ*, p. 40.

call it what you will—that his whole nature would become open and susceptible to God increasingly. That is, Mysticism is an Art and has its way of self-development, and this way is open to all who want God enough to walk in it faithfully. But before I ask you to take up this way, I want to suggest that you begin at this point to read the writings of some Mystic. You will be able to meet him now on his own ground, "the ground of *his* heart." You are both after the same thing. You will be in sympathy, at least, with his purpose. Let me warn you however that such reading must be persevered in, for you will meet much at first with which you will not be sympathetic; much will be unintelligible to you, and much that you think you understand will be alien if not repulsive. This makes your first introduction to Mystic literature hard. But you will not be daunted if your heart is fixed, and when once you "catch the idea" the reading becomes easy and the sympathy grows.

If you will allow me to suggest, out of my own experience, I think you will find your path made easier if you read such a book as Professor Rufus M. Jones's "Social Law in the Spiritual World," and then, a good deal later,

Evelyn Underhill's fascinating and authoritative work called "Mysticism," which quotes and elaborates and teaches and draws you toward the subject as no other book does. But in between, and principally, you should read some real Mystic's real book,—"Theologia Germanica" is good to begin with. There is a little book edited by Dr. Inge, selected from the German Mystics, called "Light, Life and Love," which will serve as an introduction to Eckhart and Tauler and Ruysbroek and Suso. Then there is the English Mystic, Walter Hilton, whom I have just quoted, with his "Scale (or Ladder) of Perfection." These are all sane, very little ascetic, and not in the least visionary. I dare not begin to tell you what to read after these. You will be guided, I am sure, and find what is best for you in the multitude of riches. Those whom I like best might not appeal to you: St. Augustine's Confessions, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Catherine of Siena; Santa Teresa and Molinos of Spain, Suso and Ruysbroek, besides Eckhart and Tauler, in Germany; and that wonderful woman, Mother Julian of Norwich, who will surely grow in your estimation and love if you will give her the chance. At any rate, I conclude

this advice by asking you to read Mysticism much more than you read about Mysticism. After you have read the Mystics themselves, the books about them, even the lectures about them, will seem to you trite and tasteless.

I come back to the Mystic's course of training. What are the means he uses? We have studied them in the second lecture. He insists that they are only means. His purpose is so clear and intense that he can never worship his tools. As I said, he cares for purity of heart only that by it he may see God. That desire comes first, then follows Conversion. We cannot get away from that. It may not be fashionable, but it is psychological and Biblical and divine. And when a man is converted he repents and reforms. He repudiates his sin and disciplines his character.

But even goodness does not avail by itself. To see God there are other veils than sin to be removed. And so we come to the fourth and most important step (for the Mystic)—Contemplation. This is where we must lay the emphasis for ourselves and for others. This is where practice is most imperative and most useful. Many repent and have faith but few

reach the fruition of union with God, because few understand the necessity of Prayer, of Quiet and Silence, of Recollection and Concentration, and few, very few, care to give much time to these exercises, which take much time and more patience and trouble. I repeat, it takes time. Darwin watched the tendrils of a vine for years to gain one scientific fact, and studied earthworms month after month. Is God more easily come at? It is a good question to ask ourselves whether, in our search for God, we have given, with any regularity, even a half hour a day to Contemplation. God is worth at least as much time as that.

You will be astonished, when you seriously try, to find how long it does take you, and how hard it is, to become perfectly quiet and absolutely silent. To know God, to commune with God, to worship God, not only your lips but your soul must be silent. Men complain of God's silences and call him inscrutable, but I think, the reason is that God cannot communicate with them because they never give him a chance; they are so busy, so noisy, so interminably loquacious themselves. He is waiting for a decent pause in the conversation. "Be

still and know that I am God." "There was silence and I heard a voice." [9]

. . . . . .

Do I end abruptly? I know that I ought to say more, but I know that I don't know any more. It would not be honest to keep on talking. Here I must stop and be content. No, not content, but compelled, just to point onward.

The third and last stage in my definition of Mysticism is still my goal. I said, "He perseveres until he accomplishes his purpose. God's presence within him becomes the supreme reality of his life. He attains the union with God." It is here, at the end of our common search, that my last word must be said. "The Mystic experience is not the fruit of conscious endeavor or self discipline or continued prayer or meditation. These may fit the soul

[9] "You need not go to heaven to see God, or to regale yourself with God. Nor need you speak loud, as if He were far away. Nor need you cry for wings like a dove so as to fly to Him. Settle yourself in solitude, and you will come upon God in yourself. And then entreat Him as your Father, and relate to Him your troubles. Those who can in this manner shut themselves up in the little heaven of their own hearts, where He dwells Who made heaven and earth, let them be sure that they walk in the most excellent way: *they lay their pipe right up to the fountain.*

for the gift, but when it comes it comes from Another." [10] Humbly, hopefully, yes, with absolute assurance I await that Shewing.

[10] Cobb: *Mysticism and the Creed*, p. xiii.

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